

1 Stop gets it spot on

By [Brendan Seery](#)

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Winners: SAB's 'How about none for the road?' ad hits the mark, too. Aussie ad for sperm donation, 'All hands on d*ck', stands out, but would be banned here.



Winning ads featured in this week's Orchids and Onions column...

In marketing, it is the element which sets you apart from your competitors which makes the consumer initially bite – and it is also the thing which keeps them coming back.

Like the hundreds of thousands of other lemmings, we hit the road for the coast at the weekend and, of all the marketing messages I saw along the way, I think the Engen 1-Stop at Colesberg got it spot on. We've always patronised 1-Stops more than the competition, Shell's Ultra City operations and Caltex's Star Stops.

(Total does not have as many so they are unrated for the purposes of this assessment). Now, when we first started travelling the N1 (to Cape Town and then later to Knysna), there was only the Ultra City, in Colesberg.

Even in those days, when there was a lot less traffic, that Shell was still crowded and hot. Parking places were, in the main, not covered so it was rather like taking a break in a microwave.

“ The Engen 1-Stop, on the Cape Town side of the town, initially seemed pretty much the same, especially when it came to decent parking spots. After a break of a few years, though, the station (which was relaunched at the end of 2016) is really turning into the “oasis” that its operators promised it would become. ”

There is a smart, clean Wimpy (packed on the days we were there) with a safe, fenced play area. But, for us, the big hit was the fact that whoever designed the place had the foresight to plant grape vines... which are now growing into decent shade covering. The stop was so restful that, on the way back, there was no choice but to pull in.

Thoughtfulness, plus good design, makes a good product but also good, long-lived marketing because it generates happy customers and repeat business. Orchids to all those involved in turning the Engen 1-Stop in Colesberg into a true oasis.

Advertising and marketing tend to plummet in the festive season – but I am not quite sure why. The customers are still alive

– and spending even more – but they are in different places.

Perhaps the media planners could think about adjusting their platform spread to take that into account. In terms of fresh creative, though, there was little to raise eyebrows in December and early January – save for a simple print ad for SA Breweries about the dangers of drinking and driving. It said, simply: “How about none for the road?”

Perhaps it did give some pause for thought – and perhaps even Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula’s frenetic marketing and Twitter campaigns did have some effect because, although the final figures are not yet tallied, it does appear the death toll on the country’s roads did go down over the festive season.

An Orchid to SAB for being a good corporate citizen.

“ Not much in the way of really rubbishy ads lately. ”



SAB's 'None for the road.'

Finally, I haven't seen much in the way of really rubbishy advertising or marketing lately, so I thought I would share two international examples of clever marketing.

The first Orchid in this respect (and please do not label me a terrorist for doing this) is Iran Air, the national carrier of Iran.

“ There are many [#IranianCulturalSites](#). Which one is your favorite? [#Iran](#) [#Persepolis](#) [pic.twitter.com/tNRnR3FpXb](#)— Iran Air (@IranAir_IRI) [January 5, 2020](#) ”

The airline sent out a tweet in the wake of US President Donald Trump’s bullying threat to destroy 52 Iranian sites – “some at a very high level & important to Iran & the Iranian culture”.

It posted photos of the historic site at Persepolis with the question: “There are many [#IranianCulturalSites](#). Which is your favourite?” The photos emphasised the ancient nature of the Persian civilisation and, at the same time as reminding people that Iran is still a beautiful place to visit, also reminded the world of the absurdity of Trump’s threats.

Then an adman I follow, Australian Ryan Wallman, who goes by the Twitter handle Dr Draper, posted some work his company – Wellmark Health (he is creative director there) had done for a campaign to boost IVF (in vitro fertilisation) in Australia and, specifically, to get men to become sperm donors.

“ Just genius 💎💎 [https://t.co/wUkaok6Bfo](#)— Katherine Wildman 💎💎💎💎💎 Haydn Grey (@haydngrey) [January 9, 2020](#) ”

It’s cheeky – as you expect from the Aussies – and it’s the sort of thing we used to do in years past in the South African ad world, before the chill hand of political correctness and wokeness started taking offence.

This campaign would no doubt have been banned had it flighted here because “Mrs Shocked from Prieska” would have complained to the Advertising Regulatory Board, which would have instantly sallied forth to preserve morality.

I’ll leave you to make your own decision, based on the images.

ABOUT BRENDAN SEERY

Brendan Seery has been in the news business for most of his life, covering coups, wars, famines - and some funny stories - across Africa. Brendan Seery's *Orchids and Onions*

column ran each week in the *Saturday Star* in Johannesburg and the *Weekend Argus* in Cape Town.

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