

Alistair King & James Barty: A magical combination

By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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It was a special moment at Thursday's FM Ad Focus Awards when James Barty and Alistair King were named the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award, a moment felt not only by the two founders of King James, but by everyone in attendance.



The emotion was visible when Alistair King and James Barty of King Kings were honoured with the FMAdFocus Awards Lifetime Achiever Award recently

King says it was a big night for him personally. "It was special because it was the recognition of us as a partnership and that brought that extra weight to it. It kinda hit me when I was on the stage, and I realised how special it was."

Barty agrees. "I did not expect it to be as emotional as it was. I have had that feedback from several people; I think they felt the emotion in our relationship and how we express ourselves."



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An enviable partnership

King says he has always had a sense that our partnership was envied. "We have had many people comment that our partnership is something special. And we know because what we built is something special."

“I always had a sense that we are a magical combination and that our experience in our agency and what we have built reflects this.”

Barty says, that is what came out tonight. “We have done something remarkable together, beyond our wildest dreams. You don’t set out expecting to achieve these kinds of goals in your life.”

“I grew up admiring the great partnerships of the founders of the likes of John Hunt and Reg Lascaris, and many others. They are the people that inspired me who you hope you can emulate,” he adds.

A bee in his bonnet

The pair first worked together 30 years ago on Big Korn Bites. They were eventually nominated onto the Ogilvy Board together. “We were the younger, next generation of leadership being recognised. It was nice to have that recognition and to affirm that we were doing good work,” says Barty.

But King had a bee in his bonnet as he puts it. “I wanted to start my own agency, and James and I were at a cocktail party and we had the conversation, and I said do you want to go start an agency?” tells King.

“When we started out, we were not thinking about longevity, we were more thinking about the next piece of work that we had to do. That is what you did, you put one foot in front of the other, and it was never a plan to be 25 years or more. It was always just what can we do next, that’s all it was,” says Barty



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Proud of our work

“I am very aware of what I can hold up for my life and in my brain, it has always been ads. I have started to get a sense that we have built a body of work which is quite remarkable, and I can say to people that I have self-actualised with my career because I am proud of the work that I have done,” says King.

“And I am proud of work we have done building the agency we built,” he says.

He adds: “And tucked away in there is our relationship and what we have done together and I am so proud of that – and that’s why this award is special.”

Barty says they have always rated recognition from their peers more highly than other recognition. “When admiration comes from your peers, it is always more gratifying.”

More to come

But Barty says they are not done.

“A lifetime achievement award is a funny one in a sense because you can only earn it once you spend time, but you want to know that it is not the bookend. It is not the full stop. You still have a contribution to make, whatever that contribution is.

“And it’s great to celebrate where we are and what we have done, but we are still on our journey and from here on we will hopefully continue to carve our path, whatever that may be,” he says

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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