
Nkhensani Nkosi

Stoned Cherrie

COUNTRY	South Africa
INDUSTRY	Consumer
YEAR SELECTED	2005
WEBSITE	www.stonedcherrie.co.za

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Nkhensani Nkosi, entrepreneur, TV star and actress, has used her celebrity to lead a new wave of activism among young South African women. She aims to create a post-Apartheid identity defined by characteristics beyond black and white. Her company, Stoned Cherrie, espouses this mission and has become one of the hottest fashion lines in the country.

Nkhensani was born in Johannesburg, but spent time in America while her father received his doctorate at Yale. She earned a degree in Industrial Psychology and Sociology from the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. Interested in entertainment, Nkhensani became a trainee script evaluator and was soon promoted to a scriptwriter for one of South Africa's most popular comedies. Today, she is co-producer and co-host of a talk show featuring well-known South Africans sharing their success stories to inspire others.

In 1999, as Nkhensani travelled throughout Africa with a model search contest, she realized that the urban energy so dynamic on the continent had never been transformed into a brand label. She saw an opportunity to build a company celebrating South Africa's identity in the 21st Century, and created STONED CHERRIE, a now incredibly popular urban African fashion label. The name as well as the style stems from South African origins: Stoned represents strength, and Cherrie is slang for women.

Launched in 2000 to rave reviews, Stoned Cherrie is a women's designer fashion brand that expresses South Africa's afro-urban culture by mixing modern style with images of iconic moments in South Africa's history, political icons, and symbols banned during Apartheid. Stoned Cherrie has an exclusive agreement with Bailey's Historical Archives in Johannesburg to use images from the 1950's Afrocentric Drum magazine capturing the black protest culture that challenged Apartheid. In four years, the brand has gained significant recognition in South Africa and abroad, earning features on BBC, CNN and Australian Television.

Stoned Cherrie works with the African Feeding scheme, a national program that provides underprivileged women with training and work opportunities. The company employs women in economically depressed communities to process and dye fabrics using traditional techniques and patterns.

Nkhensani serves as a role model to South African women both through her work as a social activist and by her success as an entrepreneur. She was recognized as the 2003 Young Business Achiever of the Year by Young Business Quarterly and the 2005 Top Success Story of the Year by Top Women in Business & Government.
