

## Russian Bear competition winners collaborate with SA icons

Russian Bear has announced the outcome of Ultimate Collaboration - a competition to provide young, up-and-coming creatives with the opportunity to collaborate with Nadia Nakai and Blaq Diamond.



Fans were asked to dust off their portfolios and show Russian Bear what they could do by sliding into their DMs on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and they did not disappoint. In fact, fans and creatives alike took the competition to the next level with over 700 entries across music, fashion and art.

“We were overwhelmed at the number of entries received across our three brand pillar categories, namely Music, Fashion and Art. We also reached over one million consumers during this campaign, surpassing our projected targets,” said Lauren Justus, marketing manager at Edward Snell.

Each entry was filtered through before shortlisting the top nine applicants, three in each category. Each finalist was interviewed before the Russian Bear audience voted on their favourite in each category. In order to select the top five winners, votes from audiences, Nakai and Blaq Diamond were taken into consideration.

“Nadia Nakai and Blaq Diamond really exemplified what we look for in collaborators. Not only are they hard-working and respected creatives in the industry, but they have what it takes to take things to the next level. Blaq Diamond represents Russian Bear Original and Energy Fusion while Nadia, our first-ever female on the brand, represents our various other vodka flavours,” added Justus.

Nakai added, “Being part of the Russian Bear family as the first-ever female brand ambassador is a dream come true. Working with young, up-and-coming artists and creators, many of whom remind me of myself, is a great way to give back to the audience that helped me build my career. I have so many people to thank who helped me get to where I am today and collaborating with the Ultimate Collaboration Competition winners is just one exciting way to give back. We truly have shining stars in South Africa, and I’m proud to be a part of a brand that recognises this and provides a platform for success.”

Blaq Diamond also shared their thoughts on the importance of collaboration. “Being able to meet and work with industry professionals comes with the job but getting to this point is no easy task. With brands like Russian Bear giving urban youth the opportunity to make their mark is incredibly valuable. We hope other brands follow Russian Bear’s lead, which we believe can only lead to greatness.”