

## **Eastern Cape butcher's journey from unemployed student to prestige global club**

For Peddie-born Master Butcher, Mthetheleli Booi (39), butchery is an art, requiring highly specialised skill and mastery. He is among 17 butchers from the Eastern Cape who joined the global club of certified Master Butchers, graduating from the Shoprite Group's Master Meat Artisan Programme.

Mthetheleli started working for Shoprite as a student in 2008, assisting with general duties such as deboning, making sausage, and cleaning. He worked his way up to be appointed as Blockman in 2010, and Trainee Manager for Shoprite Ziyabuya in 2012 – which is where he started his Master Butcher training, graduating in 2023.

“Everything I know about the meat industry I learned from working at Shoprite,” Mthetheleli says.

Being enrolled in the Master Meat Artisan programme made him even more confident in taking up his latest role as Butchery Manager.

“With the experience and training I received as a Master Butcher; customers can trust that they will receive the best service when they come into the store as well as advice on what the best meat cuts are for their specific needs,” he commented.

He also believes it is not only the customers that are benefitting from his new-found expertise: “The programme taught me to encourage a culture of learning and establish an environment wherein employees can share their ideas,” he shared.

This elite butchery learning programme, underwritten by the [United Kingdom's Institute of Meat](#), provides participants with extensive knowledge in meat processing practices from farm to fork. To qualify, butchers are required to build a substantial portfolio of evidence that includes modules on butchery expertise, business acumen and food hygiene and safety, among others.

The Shoprite Group is the only company in Africa to provide this exclusive and highly specialised butchery learning programme. It aims to boost the development of a scarce and sought-after skill, provide career opportunities for its employees and put its supermarkets on the map as world-class specialists in meat processing.

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