

Company history

69 YEARS OF DOING BUSINESS

1940s

Remgro's founding history goes back to the forties of the previous century when the founder of the Group, Dr Anton Rupert, established in Johannesburg, South Africa, the tobacco company Voorbrand, forerunner of Rembrandt Group Limited (Rembrandt). Rembrandt was incorporated in 1948.

Rembrandt thus entered the South African cigarette and tobacco industry in 1948 and in the fifties expanded abroad through the establishment of various international partnerships.

Rembrandt's interests in the wine and spirits industry also date back to the 1940s when Dr Rupert and Mr D W R Hertzog founded Distillers Corporation.

1950s

Rembrandt was listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in 1956.

1970s

In 1972, the overseas tobacco interests of Rembrandt were consolidated in Rothmans International, which was listed on the London Stock Exchange.

Since the 1970s Rembrandt expanded its interests outside tobacco, wine and spirits with investments in various other economic sectors in South Africa, amongst which were banking and financial services, mining, printing and packaging, medical services, engineering and food interests.

1980s

The separation of local and overseas interests was effected in 1988 with the founding of Compagnie Financière Richemont AG (Richemont) – a Swiss-listed luxury goods group that included brands such as Cartier, Dunhill and Mont Blanc which then also acquired a share in Rothmans International.

1990s

During 1993, Rembrandt co-founded South Africa's first cellular telephony company Vodacom, which was eventually disposed of in 2006 by VenFin Limited (VenFin). In 1995, Rembrandt and Richemont consolidated their respective tobacco interests in Rothmans International, at the time the world's fourth largest cigarette manufacturer, which was then delisted, and then in 1999 merged these interests with those of British American Tobacco plc (BAT), the world's second largest cigarette producer. Since then the investment in BAT was held through a joint holding company in which Rembrandt (now Remgro) and Richemont held 33¹/₃% and 66²/₃% respectively. Following the above restructuring, Rembrandt became a pure investment holding company.

2000

The restructuring of Rembrandt was advanced a step further in September 2000 when the South African holding structure, consisting of four listed companies, was collapsed into two listed companies, namely Remgro and VenFin. Following the restructuring, Remgro represented Rembrandt's established tobacco, financial services, mining and industrial interests, while the telecommunication and technology interests were housed in VenFin.

2008

During November 2008, Remgro unbundled its investment in BAT to its shareholders by way of an interim dividend *in specie* amounting to a total amount of R55.2 billion. Following the BAT unbundling the Group's remaining interests consisted mainly of investments in banking and financial services, printing and packaging, motor components, glass products, medical services, mining, petroleum products, food, wine and spirits and various other trade mark products.

At 30 June 2017, the value of the unbundled BAT shares has increased to R181.2 billion.

2009

During November 2009, Remgro and VenFin merged again, adding media and technology interests to the Group's investments.