

Crimson Rush cocktail recipe

Continued from page 1B

Preparation:
Master Mixologist Dale DeGroff, author of *The Craft of the Cocktail* offers this twist on a traditional martini. Stir or shake Osborne Fino Sherry and Plymouth Gin and strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a

small pitted Spanish cocktail olive.
Finotini
Ingredient:
5 oz. Osborne Fino Sherry
Preparation:
Pour the Osborne Sherry into cocktail shaker and add lots of ice. Shake and strain into a martini glass. Garnish

with olives. Serve with Spanish Marcona almonds and Cabrales cheese (or any hard cheeses).
Shaken or stirred, sweet or dry, these cocktails are bound to please this summer, whether it is at a party or by the pool. Now go out and celebrate summer, Spanish

style!
Freixenet Cordon Negro Brut is imported by Freixenet USA of Sonoma, California. Osborne Fino Sherry is imported by W.J. Deutsch & Sons of White Plains, New York.

Senator wants pimps to pay their tax share

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Pimps and sex traffickers could soon find themselves being chased by tax collectors in addition to the vice squad.

Sen. Charles Grassley, chairman of the tax-writing Senate Finance Committee, wants the tax-collecting Internal Revenue Service to chase pimps and sex traffickers with the same fervor it stalked gangster Al Capone for tax evasion in the late 1920s.

Grassley would hit pimps with fines and lengthy prison sentences for failing to file employment forms and to withhold taxes for the women and girls under their command.

The proposal would make certain tax crimes a felony when the evaded tax was on

money that comes from a criminal activity. A one-year prison sentence and \$25,000 fine would become a 10-year sentence and \$50,000 fine for each employment form that a pimp or sex trafficker had failed to file.

Grassley planned to propose the penalties when his panel meets Wednesday.

"The thugs who run these trafficking rings are exploiting society's poorest girls and women for personal gain," Grassley said. "The IRS goes after sex traffickers."

Michael Horowitz, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, said the change would have the potential to put pimps out of business without difficult trials that require women to testify to abuse and mistreatment.

"We need to simply treat the pimps and massage parlor operators the way we would treat anybody who takes the proceeds of a customer transaction from somebody and then gives a fraction of it back," he said.

Under tax law, that relationship makes the pimp an employer, requiring the filing of a wage statement and the withholding of payroll taxes, including Social Security.

Grassley envisions creation of an office inside the Internal Revenue Service to prosecute sex traffickers for violating tax laws. The office would get \$2 million to get started, and it would be allowed to keep a portion of the taxes it collected.

The IRS work is intended to build on efforts under way to curb worldwide trafficking.

The Justice Department, collaborating with U.S. attorney offices nationwide, would identify pimps and sex traffickers and refer them to the IRS.

Grassley also wants to change the IRS whistle-blower program to allow the girls and women to participate.

When the IRS goes after a pimp or sex trafficker for tax offenses now, it conducts lengthy audits of the suspect's lifestyle to estimate incomes from illegal activities and determine taxes due.

Al Capone, a Chicago gangster, gunrunner and bootlegger, was convicted on tax charges in 1931 and served seven years of 11 1/2 years in prison sentences.

Some brands welcome attention from rap artists

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Two weeks ago, Jay-Z announced he was boycotting Cristal at his clubs after the champagne company's president indicated that he was not thrilled by the brand's association with hip-hop culture—comments the rapper called "racist."

But what about the other high-end brands whose names constantly appear in rap lyrics? Do they embrace the free publicity or cringe at it?

It depends on which company you ask.

Mercedes-Benz — the most-mentioned brand in last year's top songs—says the car's popularity in hip-hop circles certainly didn't hurt sales growth over the last dozen years.

Cadillac, which lost some luster in the 1980s and '90s, credits its turnaround in part to the popularity of the Escalade among rappers and other celebrities. Moët Hennessy USA said the wine and liquor company was "thrilled" about its affiliation with hip-hop.

Bentley Motors and Louis Vuitton—also among the most name-checked brands in music—were more reticent on the subject.

While some companies may shy away from association with a culture often marked by misogyny and violence, it is undeniable that hip-hop wields immeasurable power and influence in business.

Very aspirational in some respects and now synonymous with youth culture in many corners of the world, hip-hop has long been credited with—or criticized for—helping everything from clothing to cars.

But periodically, hip-hop's chief arbiters—like Jay-Z—turn on brands because of slights, real or perceived, to

the culture.

Pepsi agreed in 2003 to give \$3 million to charity after Def Jam co-founder Russell Simmons threatened a boycott. The soda company had dropped an endorsement deal with rapper Ludacris following complaints from conservative commentator Bill O'Reilly.

Designer Tommy Hilffiger was dogged for years by rumors that he didn't want minorities buying his clothes. His company, which denied the entire episode ever happened, never quite regained the same popularity in hip-hop.

Lucian James, an executive with a branding agency that tracks mentions of products in Billboard's Top 20, warned that in a fast-changing marketplace, luxury brands in particular must get to know relatively new customers while maintaining its traditional base.

James said Cristal put itself at serious risk of losing the new clientele because of the comments made by Frederic Rouzaud, the president and chief executive of Champagne Louis Roederer—a 230-year-old French company that makes the bubbly.

In a recent issue of *The Economist* magazine, Rouzaud said the company viewed the affection for his company's champagne from rappers and their fans with "curiosity and serenity."

Asked by the magazine if the association between Cristal and the "bling lifestyle" could be detrimental, Rouzaud replied:

"That's a good question, but what can we do? We can't forbid people from buying it. I'm sure Dom Perignon or Krug would be delighted to have their business."

Jay-Z, who has made numerous references to Cristal throughout his career, pulled the champagne from his sports lounges, where bottles sold for \$450 and \$600. And, at a concert last week at Radio City Music Hall, the Def Jam Recordings president omitted "Cristal" from

some of his lyrics.

"What they don't seem to have been interested in is seeing the popularity of Cristal in hip-hop culture," James said of executives at Cristal, which ranked No. 8 in mentions in songs last year. James' company, Agenda Inc., compiles the list.

"I can't imagine Cristal recovering very quickly. It (hip-hop devotees) was a huge part of their market," James said.

Noel Hankin, vice president of multicultural initiatives at Moët Hennessy USA, said his company welcomes the association with its products like Hennessy, Dom Perignon and Belvedere.

"We appreciate that business. We want it. It's critical to our business success," Hankin said. "We've never had any hesitation or reservation about embracing the hip-hop community."

Moët Hennessy has sponsored the televised Vibe Awards, where bottles of Moët were conspicuously visible on tables. Hennessy ranked No. 6 on Agenda's report.

Louis Vuitton, which tied with Cristal at No. 8 on the list, declined to comment on the association. So did No. 2 Nike.

John Crawford, a spokesman for Bentley Motors (No. 4) released a short statement which said in part: "Bentley Motors ... believes that increased interest in the marque, from any quarter, is good for the brand as a whole."

An executive at Mercedes-Benz, part of DaimlerChrysler AG, viewed the attention from a business standpoint.

"Hip-hop is really a language of the younger generation and it's always great for a brand to be relevant with the younger or next generation of buyers," said Kass Dawson, who heads emergent markets at Mercedes-Benz.

"We consider it a complement of the highest order," Dawson said, adding that Mercedes has sponsored events related to awards shows and hip-hop magazine

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It Can Happen

So often as we think about our present circumstances, it is sometimes hard for us to believe that life can be better. We become so focused on the negative things that may be going on in our lives that they are the only things that we see.

We can only see the dead end job. We only hear about the crime that may be going on around us. Turning on the news we see only the disasters, the violence and the corruption. After seeing so much that is sad and depressing, we may come to believe that life is hopeless. We may even decide that there is no point in our trying to live a more positive and uplifting life. I have heard people say it so often, "Why should I try to do better, nobody else is?"

But life can be better. It is possible for us to lead a life that is full of hope and promise. Just as we may focus on the bad things of life, we can also choose to focus on the positive and the good.

It is possible to move ahead in your career, even if you have to create your own promotion by going somewhere else. It is possible to have better relationships if we stop blaming others and accept the fact that we all have shortcomings. There is a way to rear children that you can be proud of when you teach and show them respect.

The life that we all dream about having can become a reality if only we believe and act as if it can be so. Over and over again, we rob ourselves of extraordinary joy and power because we no longer believe in the great possibilities of life.

The wonders of a great life can happen if you truly believe and purpose in your heart to make it so. Take steps right now to make your dream happen for you!

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