

# Black-owned wine company produces first product

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY  
THE CHRONICLE

After spending 20 years in corporate America, Jakoma Martin was ready for a new challenge, which was being an entrepreneur. Her business, Oak City Bubbly, has recently released their first product, Blush Crush.

Blush Crush is a rosé wine that is packaged in a can, which makes it convenient for travel, beaches, parks, or outdoors, without the hassle of corkscrews or wine glasses.

Martin worked in the hospitality industry and initially started a mo-

on its own, either chilled or over ice. It is served in 12 oz. cans with an ABV of 13%. Each can is equal to about two glasses of wine and is vinted and canned in North Carolina.

"We are all about buy local and drink local," she said about her business. "We are female minority, Black owned, and there is a push to support Black businesses and local businesses."

Martin says she is "proud" of being a minority female business owner. She says she has put in a lot of hard work, long nights and early mornings to bring this wine to light.

business connections, no investment partners, so I just hope that when people see the product on the shelf, they understand it's a Black woman who owns this product."

For Martin, there was some nervousness about leaving her corporate job to start her own business. She says she was so used to doing one thing for so long a time, it was somewhat scary to step out and do something new.

"It was a lot of apprehension, because of course, when there is a steady paycheck involved and then you are 110% responsible for making sure



Submitted photo

Jakoma Martin created Oak City Bubbly, a female minority, Black-owned wine company.

bile bartending business. Martin and her husband continued to toss around ideas and after collaborating with business partners, they chose to begin Oak

"I tell my friends all the time that it's not something you just jump up and do," she said about starting her business. "I'm very proud that on the front end

you have money to feed your family, so yeah it was very scary," she stated.

The rosé has been released in three stores around the state: Bestway



Blush Crush is a rosé wine that is packaged in a can.

City Bubbly.

Their first focus with the business was cocktail mixers, but thought the shelf life would be too short. They then turned their thoughts to craft beer, but once again changed their mind because there is a local brewery that was owned by a Black female and they did not want to intrude on her business. They finally decided on producing wine as their signature product.

"We had a connection in North Carolina with a family that has a beautiful vineyard and they had more capacity to create a rosé, so that is how we got to the wine," said Martin. "We had a few product ideas from start to finish."

According to Martin, their rosé is lightly effervescent with finishing notes of stone fruit and is very versatile. It can be used in cocktails or drunk

that I sacrificed and when I say sacrifice, I mean I was very smart about making sure I saved my money, and by doing so it has allowed me to not feel the pressure as much.

"You don't normally see many Black women who have a product like this, and it makes me proud I could do that. Sometimes we get so caught up in the corporate rat race that we don't even think we would be able to do something like this. It's not 100% hard to do, but it does take some thought and planning."

Martin hopes she can be an inspiration to others who are looking to follow the same path.

"I do come from Winston-Salem and, of course, I don't come from a family with money, so everything I have done has been from the ground up," she said. "No inheritance, no real

Grocery Store (Greensboro), Taylor's Wine Shop (Raleigh) and Falls Village Wine and Beer (Raleigh). Martin says they wanted to do a soft release of the wine to get feedback. They will have a second launch in 2021 with a wider release.

Martin has plans to expand their wine selections following the rosé. They plan to have a chardonnay and a cabernet, along with a craft beer.

"We definitely want to become a household name, especially in our community," she went on to say.

Martin says she encourages anyone with a dream to surround themselves with like-minded individuals who are "doing what you are doing." She says even if you are afraid, you have to step out on faith and get support from a mentor and not let anyone discourage you.



WINSTON SALEM  
CHAPTER

## The 2020 Winston-Salem NAACP Election

On Saturday, November 21, 2020, the election of Officers and at-large members of the Executive Committee will take place at the NAACP Winston-Salem Branch. The election will be held at: 4130 Oak Ridge Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27105. Voting will commence at 10 am and conclude at 2 pm.

To vote in a Branch election, one must be a member in good standing of the Branch 30 days prior to the election. A form of identification is required to vote.

For additional questions or details please contact Patricia Biassi, Branch Secretary: [staff@naacpws.org](mailto:staff@naacpws.org)

We look forward to your participation in this event.

Alvin E. Carlisle, President W-S NAACP



### PUBLIC NOTICE: CALEA Accreditation Visit for WSSU Campus Police on Nov. 9

The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) will perform an on-site accreditation visit for the WSSU Campus Police Department.

A public information session will occur on Monday, November 9, 2020 between 3:30-4:30 p.m. via Zoom. Please contact Captain Stephanie Garrett 336-750-8728 or [harmon@wssu.edu](mailto:harmon@wssu.edu) for the link.

If you cannot attend the public information session, you may share your comments by telephone calling 336-750-2904 between 1 and 4 p.m. on November 9.