

Celebrate the History and Future of Hip-Hop Soul

Written by Robert ID2675

Wednesday, 31 May 2006 14:08 -

Remy Martin is turning up the volume for Black Music Month., the cognac-maker announced its plans to help raise awareness and recognition of black music this June. Activities will include a national online consumer poll to name the top hip-hop soul artists and songs of all time, a partnership with hip-hop and rap music magazine XXL for a hip-hop soul special issue (on newsstands now).

Their efforts will come to life during an exclusive New York City VIP kick-off party next week, featuring a performance from XXL cover artist Keyshia Cole. Remy Martin will also present the first Remy Martin 1738 Award for Contributions to Black Music to the Hip-Hop Association.

First celebrated in 1926, Black Music Month has been proclaimed by the President every year since 1979. 2006 marks the second year that Remy Martin 1738 has developed a program around Black Music Month. In 2005, the brand teamed with renowned hip-hop producer Hype Williams and collaborated with the Rhythm & Blues Association and Jazz Alliance to compile a comprehensive list of the 1,738 most influential songs in black music. This year, Remy Martin is building substantially on that foundation.

"Remy Martin 1738 and Black Music Month are a natural fit. The 1738 brand has quietly found a place as the spirit of choice for a number of high-profile individuals in the music industry -- and the inner circles around them," said Steve Hissam, Remy Martin category director. "This year's effort reflects our desire to further drive awareness through direct engagement with music fans. The poll, the special issue, the party and the award -- they're all geared toward getting more people involved in the conversation and elevating the visibility of Black Music Month."

The revamped 1738.com is a testament to that effort. The Web site includes the list of 1,738 songs compiled last year, which users can listen to, as well as information on the XXL special issue and in-market events. The site's primary focus, however, is an online poll that asks fans to select their favorite hip-hop soul artists and tracks of all time. Daily updates are made to the leader board and users can check back to view the top "17 and 38." Hundreds have already cast their votes and thousands more are expected throughout the month of June. Remy Martin will announce the top 17 artists and 38 tracks at the beginning of July.

While 1738.com solicits the "people's choice," Remy Martin has also teamed with XXL to provide a professional take on the landscape of hip-hop soul music via sole-sponsorship of

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Hip-Hop Soul magazine, a special issue from the publishers of XXL. The stand-alone publication hit newsstands in mid-May and pays tribute to Black Music Month, spotlighting the category's newest ambassadors (Keyshia Cole and Ne-Yo grace the cover) while also paying tribute, in a photo essay, to the legends who pioneered the hip-hop soul category; including Ray Charles, Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin, and Patti LaBelle.

On June 6, Remy Martin and XXL will co-host a kick-off celebration for Black Music Month in New York City, with a performance by Cole, whose music can be heard on the Mission Impossible: 3 soundtrack. At the party, the brand will present the first Remy Martin 1738 Award for Contributions to Black Music to the Hip-Hop Association, whose mission is to facilitate, foster and preserve hip-hop culture. Throughout the month of June, the brand will also host promotions around the country.

Visit www.1738.com for more information.