

# <http://insidefandb.com/2010/02/cocktails-for-a-country-2/> **COCKTAILS FOR A COUNTRY**

*Spirited sipping leads to \$5,800 raised at the Hearts & Cocktails for Haiti Benefit*

By Francine Cohen



Photo courtesy of Lush Life Productions

Who said people drink just for pleasure? Sometimes they drink to help those in pain. At least that's what was going on at Bar Celona in Brooklyn on Sunday, January 31st when hundreds of spirits industry professionals and cocktail enthusiasts gathered to raise a glass and some much needed funds for Haiti. Haitian American Ray Raymond of Leblon Cachaça and Dave Catania of Chairman's Reserve organized this important evening and welcomed their industry friends and cocktail lovers to join them for cocktails created especially for the evening by some of New York's best mixologists.

Explains Raymond, "Haiti is one of the world's poorest countries and, once again, they've been battered by natural disaster. Without our assistance, and the generosity of others, they will find it near impossible to reclaim their lives. This disaster is bigger than all of us. We work in an industry that's about celebrating. We sell liquor for a living and profit off it and this event gives us a great opportunity to turn that celebration into a night where we take the focus off the profit and put our money where it counts – into the hands of those who need it most. My mother who was born in Cape Haitian outside Port Au Prince has always been a rock, there for others, and I wanted to give back to her country in her honor." Catania adds, "It's one of the largest tragedies of our lifetime to see this so close to home. We have the friends, connections, and ability to do something like this so we have to do what we can. Ray and I used what we have at our disposal, calling in every favor we could."

Jim Meehan (PDT) called to say he wanted in on this evening and he led this crew of accomplished bartenders with his Barbancourt Fight Sour cocktail in honor of Haiti's national spirit. An all-star cadre of liquid talent rotated behind the bar all night and punch flowed alongside the cocktails at the USBG and LUPEC tables. \$40 got guests entry into the event and an opportunity to taste drinks such as Meehan's creation, The Study by Erin Williams' (Hush Cocktails), and Brian Van Flandern's Relief Punch. Other talent behind the bar included: Contemporary Cocktails, Danielle Crouch, Dale DeGross, Leo DeGross, Abigail Gullo, Lisa Hare, Lynette Marrero, Steve Myers, Justin Noel, Aisha Sharpe, Cliff Travers, Willy Shine, Brian Van Flandern, Charlotte Voisey, Erin Williams, and Hal Wolin.

Their drinks were inspired by the thousands of dollars worth of product donated by brands which include: Appleton, Avera, Beefeater, Bulleit, Chairman's Reserve, Combier, Domaine de Canton, Domaine Select, Don Julio, Don Q, Double Cross, Fidencio Mezcal, G'Vine Floraison, Ilegal Mezcal, Leblon Cachaça, Luna Sueno, Maker's Mark, Milagro, Palm Bay Imports, Partida, Pernod Ricard, Pipeline Brands, Plymouth, Regatta Ginger Beer, Rhum Clement, Sailor Jerry, Santa Teresa, Scorpion Mezcal, St. Germain, Tom's Tonic, Tuthilltown, VeeV, Vision Brands Wines, and Zacapa.

Also donating to the cause was noted saloon artist Jill DeGross who was on hand to sign her book *Lush Life: Portraits From The Bar*, with all the proceeds going to The American Red Cross. And local merchants including Park Avenue Liquors, Havana Central Restaurant Group, and Calle Ocho offered gift certificates, while participating brands put together liquor gift baskets – all of which were raffled for just \$1 a chance and raised \$500.

All this money was raised in the sleek space owned by Cynthia Diaz who donated Bar Celona for the evening. Diaz's Dominican heritage drove her passion to donate the space for a cause that allowed her to

give to the nation that borders the Dominican Republic. Raymond comments, “She didn’t have to do this. She said she wanted to do this. Her staff even came in for free. It’s more than I could have asked for.” Raymond and Catania asked their industry to take a moment to search their hearts to help others less fortunate and their industry friends and colleague answered by raising \$5,800 at a fun night that was also a good cause.

Tags: [Abigail Gullo](#), [Aisha Sharpe](#), [American Red Cross](#), [Appleton](#), [Averna](#), [Bar Celona](#), [Beefeater](#), [benefit](#), [Brian Van Flandern](#), [Bulleit](#), [Calle Ocho](#), [Chairman's Reserve](#), [Chairman's Reserve](#), [Charlotte Voisey](#), [Cliff Travers](#), [cocktails](#), [Combiér](#), [Contemporary Cocktails](#), [Dale DeGroff](#), [Danielle Crouch](#), [Dave Catania](#), [Domaine de Canton](#), [Domaine Select](#), [Don Julio](#), [Don Q](#), [Double Cross](#), [Erin Williams](#), [Fidencio Mezcal](#), [G’Vine Floraison](#), [Haiti](#), [Hal Wolin](#), [Havana Central](#), [Illegal Mezcal](#), [Jim Meehan](#), [Justin Noel](#), [Leblon](#), [Leblon Cachaça](#), [Leo DeGroff](#), [Lisa Hare](#), [Luna Sueno](#), [Lynette Marrero](#), [Maker’s Mark](#), [Milagro](#), [Palm Bay Imports](#), [Park Avenue Liquors](#), [Partida](#), [PDT](#), [Pernod Ricard](#), [Pipeline Brands](#), [Plymouth](#), [Ray Raymond](#), [Regatta Ginger Beer](#), [Rhum Clement](#), [Sailor Jerry](#), [saloon artist](#), [Santa Teresa](#), [Scorpion Mezcal](#), [St. Germain](#), [Steve Myers](#), [Team Spirits](#), [Tom’s Tonic](#), [Tuthilltown](#), [VeeV](#), [Vision Brands Wines](#), [Willy Shine](#), [Zacapa](#)

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