



SEAGRAM'S GIN® CELEBRATES AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE ACHIEVEMENT AND BLACK HISTORY MONTH WITH THE *PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE*

LANDMARK JOB TRAINING AND MENTORING INSTITUTE RETURNS TO ATLANTA FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR

NEW YORK, February 1, 2009 – In the wake of an historic Presidential election and at a time when the nation observes the achievements and contributions of African Americans during Black History Month, the most significant economic and financial crisis in U.S. history continues to affect communities across the country. With the unemployment rate for African American males peaking at 17 percent in metro Atlanta, many are seeking opportunities and encouragement to face the days ahead. To address the rising and disparate unemployment rates among African American men in particular, Seagram's Gin® is bringing its landmark job training and mentoring program, ***The Pursuit of Excellence Institute™***, back to Atlanta this February.

Originally introduced in 2008 by the Seagram's Gin family of brands in Atlanta and Chicago in conjunction with the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency (AWDA) and the Chicago Urban League (CUL), ***The Pursuit of Excellence Institute*** is designed to provide tangible opportunities to promising individuals. The program also supports the efforts of social service organizations that work tirelessly to uplift and empower underserved communities. In 2008, the program provided grants to the AWDA and CUL; successfully training 20 men aged 25-32 and placing 99% of them into the workplace – leading to the expansion of the program in 2009.

The 2009 ***Seagram's Gin Pursuit of Excellence Institute*** will commence this February in observance of Black History Month with grants totaling \$100,000 to leading civic organizations across the country. The focal point of the program is a rigorous, four-week training session funded by Seagram's Gin and administered by the AWDA. The program will run from Monday, January 26 through Friday, February 20, 2009, culminating with a special graduation reception on Friday, February 20, 2009 with noted local celebrities and civic luminaries in attendance.

The program will pair participants with successful and inspiring individuals for one-on-one mentoring and guidance. In addition to completing weekly take-home assignments, participants will attend multiple training sessions including computer training, interview skill workshops, self-

esteem building exercises, technical training classes, and dress-for-success and financial empowerment strategies. Each participant will receive a \$500 stipend, laptop, briefcase with weekly lesson plans and supplies, as well as a suit of clothing. One outstanding participant from each city will receive a \$2,500 fellowship prize.

Candidates for the program were selected on the basis of a rigorous application and pre-screening process, including a “boardroom-style” interview with noted figures from the worlds of finance, social service, media, sports, entertainment and design. This year, Seagram’s Gin has galvanized the support of major distributor Georgia Crown Distributing Co., resulting in internships in sales or marketing that can lead to potential full-time employment.

“The *Pursuit of Excellence* program is a natural extension of the Seagram’s Gin brand’s long-standing commitment to community-focused initiatives, ranging from adult education, housing development, urban voter registration and anti-hunger campaigns,” says Bill Cherrie, Vice President, Multicultural Marketing for Pernod Ricard USA, parent company of Seagram’s Gin. “In supporting this program, our goal is to redefine the traditional corporate social responsibility approach by literally working hand in hand with local community organizations and individuals to address a critical societal issue and the detrimental effects it has not only on our urban communities, but on the entire nation.”

The Atlanta participants for the 2009 ***Seagram’s Gin Pursuit of Excellence Institute*** have been selected and are as follows:

- John Ball, 33
- Bruce Hamilton, 25
- William Heron, 29
- Abdullah Ibrahim, 28
- Patrick McGee, 25
- Isaac Mickens, 25
- Jonathan Slaton, 32
- Cedric Smith, 31
- DeMarko Stephens, 28
- Kendell Thrasher, Jr., 25

This year’s program will also provide opportunities for adults across the country to access the curriculum and materials from the training sessions through exclusive partnerships with local radio stations who will offer the coursework on their respective websites. More information on the program can also be found at www.SeagramGin.com.

“Seagram’s Gin is proud to sponsor the *Pursuit of Excellence Institute* to support the efforts of community organizations and the personal and professional goals of 10 outstanding and deserving African American men in Atlanta,” adds Abegail Domond, global marketing director for Seagram’s Gin. “As the category leader, Seagram’s Gin has always stood for innovation, quality and responsibility and we are pleased to continue that tradition of excellence.”

“We are pleased that *Seagram’s Gin Pursuit of Excellence Institute* is in Atlanta for the second year in a row,” says Deborah Lum, executive director, AWDA. “The country as well as the city of Atlanta is facing economically tough times and more than ever a program like the Seagram’s Gin Pursuit of Excellence Institute is needed. Seagram’s Gin is leading the way with corporate social responsibility and we are proud to work side by side with them on such an important and crucial initiative.”

The Pursuit of Excellence Institute is a signature program conceived and developed on behalf of Seagram’s Gin and Pernod Ricard USA by Ruder Finn’s Multicultural & Image Marketing Group.

About The Atlanta Workforce Development Agency

The Atlanta Workforce Development Agency (AWDA) is a bureau of the City of Atlanta under the Executive Offices of the Mayor. AWDA's primary purpose is to administer employment and training programs mandated under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 to the citizens of Atlanta to offer workforce solution services to the metro Atlanta businesses. AWDA programs are preparing Atlanta's current and future workforce for the ever-changing labor demands. In 2007, AWDA served over 60,000 customers. Hundreds of customers obtain employment through AWDA's weekly job fairs. Other programs include GED and SAT preparation courses, resume-writing assistance, job-readiness skill workshops and the Mayor's Youth Program.

About Seagram’s Gin

Since its launch in 1939, Seagram’s Gin has acquired a loyal and enthusiastic following of gin connoisseurs nationwide. Recognized as the leading gin in the United States, Seagram’s Gin has preserved the finest qualities of the original product—both inside and outside the signature bumpy bottle. Seagram’s Gin has become the favorite of gin and vodka drinkers seeking to add a new and flavorful dimension to their cocktails. Available in exciting and bold flavor sensations, products include the original Seagram’s Extra Dry Gin[®], the premium Seagram’s Distiller’s Reserve Gin, the award-winning *Seagram’s Orange Twisted Gin*, *Seagram’s Lime Twisted Gin*, *Seagram’s Apple Twisted Gin*, as well as a full line of *Seagram’s Gin & Juice* pre-mixed cocktail products, including the new *Seagram’s Gin & Juice Tropical Thunder*. For the last eight years,

Seagram's Gin has presented the celebrated *Seagram's Live* concert tour, bringing the very best of contemporary urban music to adult audiences nationwide. For more information, visit www.SeagramsGin.com

About Pernod Ricard USA

Pernod Ricard USA is the premium spirits and wine company in the U.S., and the largest subsidiary of Paris, France-based Pernod Ricard SA. In July, 2008, Pernod Ricard completed the acquisition of the iconic ABSOLUT® Vodka brand from the V&S Group, and Pernod Ricard USA is now the second-leading company in the U.S. by sales value.

In addition to ABSOLUT®, Pernod Ricard USA's leading brands include such prestigious spirits as The Glenlivet® Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Chivas Regal® Scotch Whisky, Jameson® Irish Whiskey, Wild Turkey® Bourbon, Seagram's Extra Dry Gin®, Beefeater® Gin, Martell® Cognac, Malibu® flavored Rum, Kahlúa® Liqueur, Hiram Walker® Liqueurs, Pernod® and Ricard®; such superior wines as Jacob's Creek® and Brancott Estate®; and such exquisite champagnes and sparkling wines as Perrier-Jouët® Champagne, G.H. Mumm™ Champagne and Mumm Napa® wines. The company is based in Purchase, New York, and has roughly 1,000 employees across the country.

Pernod Ricard USA urges all adults to consume its products responsibly and has an active campaign to promote responsible drinking. For more information on this, please visit: www.acceptresponsibility.org.

About Georgia Crown Distributing Company

Georgia Crown Distributing Co. is a full service beverage distributor, with wholesale operations doing business in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee, selling imported and domestic spirits, wines, beers and specialty products.

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