

At First Blush

Nuvo, A New Vodka-Champagne Hybrid, Hopes To Leave Female Drinkers Ticked Pink

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Anyone who thinks that cranberry-colored cocktails and pink-hued wine are just for women should take a look around the bar. It's not just X chromosomes driving up the rosé wine sales. "Sex and the City" gals may have made the Cosmo popular, but they certainly weren't the only gender drinking them. They still aren't.

Yet the idea of a pink spirit marketed specifically to women is an intriguing concept. Why? Because it's smart: Women make half of all vodka purchases. So a pink vodka, especially a pretty one, would go over well with women vodka drinkers, right?

That's what Raphael Yakoby is hoping. The creator of Hypnotiq liquor (that azure blue stuff that took off like a rocket) has created Nuvo, the first sparkling vodka liquor on the market. Made "for her," as the bottle says, Nuvo is an ultra-premium French vodka combined with French sparkling wine and fruit nectars (hints of peach and raspberry). Colored pink and invested with a bit of unexpected effervescence, it seeks to change the way women are enjoying their vodka.

Yakoby, who sold his Hypnotiq for a tidy sum (\$30 million, according to BrandWeek), did his homework before he developed Nuvo. According to his research, women make 58 percent of all liqueur purchases, 49 percent of all vodka purchases and 59 percent of all champagne and sparkling wine purchases. In other words, their buying power is huge.

Nuvo was tailored to an obviously upscale female audience. The packaging resembles a chic perfume bottle (it was created by Linea, a French company that makes fragrance packaging). The graceful, slanting cap calls to mind the tip of a lipstick. And the sheer pink hue will appeal to any fashion and beauty junkie who knows the power of pink.

Several women who tasted Nuvo over ice likened it to an upscale wine cooler. At 15 percent alcohol by volume, it is just a little more potent than wine. Ideally, Nuvo is best enjoyed over crushed ice. But it also can be used in drink recipes as a flavor stoker to vodka. A Cosmopolitan made with Nuvo is, well, a Cosmo nouveau.

Nuvo's rollout began in May in New York and Miami this month. It goes into greater distribution soon, with splashy parties that will obviously sport a feminine twist. The new product sells for about \$30 for a 375 milliliter bottle, which is half the amount of a traditional 750 milliliter bottle of hooch, and is available online at www.RaedersWine.com.

As part of Nuvo's commitment to women, the company is donating a portion of sales of each bottle to women's causes.

