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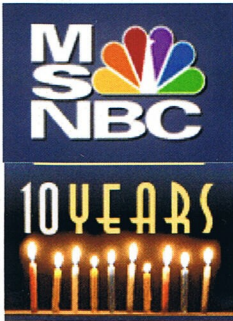
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WHAT WERE THEY THINKING? | MSNBC.com picks the bonehead business ideas of the week

Porn star's wine passion gets plaudits

Vatican vintner goes hardcore, hotel's heavy charge; a prodigious pizza

COMMENTARY

By Brian Tracey
Business Editor
MSNBC

The world of wine-making has long attracted celebrities of all stripes who want try their hands at producing a virtuous vintage, including the likes of filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola, musicians Jerry Garcia and Olivia Newton-John, and even pro golfers Ernie Els and Greg Norman.

So we shouldn't be surprised that an adult-film star has decided to dip her toes into the wine vat.

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Keith Bedford / Reuters

Natalie Oliveros poses in her apartment with her Sogno Uno wine earlier this week. Oliveros, also known as adult video actress Savanna Samson, has developed Sogno Uno with the help of an Italian vintner that has produced wines for the Vatican.

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But Savanna Samson, star of "The New Devil in Miss Jones," has gone further than simply slapping a steamy label on some cheesy chardonnay. Her Italian red wine *has received a score of 90 to 91 out of 100 by wine guru Robert Parker.*

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The key, she told Reuters recently, was lining up a respected wine maker. So she convinced Italy's Roberto Cipresso — *the Vatican* — to join the project.

"I never wanted to just do gimmick. That would just happen with me being a porn star, me having a photographer shoot the label, how risque could I get on the label — all those things," said Samson, the stage name for 31-year-old Natalie Oliveros, adding that it was pure coincidence that Cipresso also sells wines to the Vatican. She said she met him through her husband, a wine merchant.

"I knew I wanted Roberto to make my wine — I just love his passion," she said.

Samson went to Tuscany and tasted dozens of Cipresso's Italian-grown varieties, then she selected a mix of 70 percent Cesanese, 20 percent Sangiovese and 10 percent Montepulciano. She ordered over 400 cases.

The result is Sogno Uno, (Italian for Dream One) a 2004 vintage packaged under the Savanna name with a label showing Samson in a see-through gown. It was launched last month.

Parker has been called the most influential wine critic in the world, and a score of 90 to 95 denotes "an outstanding wine of exceptional complexity and character."

"Trust me, I didn't add any points for Ms. Samson's personal presentation," Parker wrote in his review.

Right, and you're that guy who reads Playboy for the articles.

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