



Cointreau talks cuisine

By Brent Gregston

Edouard Cointreau is the global godfather of cookbooks

Edouard Cointreau is the eldest son of the Cointreau family, famous the world over for its orange liqueur. But the Frenchman is not running the family business. Instead, he has become the global godfather of cookbooks, helping authors and publishers all over the planet. He is the founder of the Paris Cookbook Fair and World Gourmand Cookbook Awards. This year's awards ceremony, held in Paris last March, paid homage to chefs, publishers, photographers and designers from 154 countries.

Q You went into cookbook publishing 16 years ago. Since then it has really boomed. What sort of trends do you see emerging today?
A The number of cookbooks published and the volume of sales

have multiplied by four since 1995. The biggest trend is easy: quick recipes that you can do at home. It represents something like half of all the cookbook sales around the world. People used to learn cooking from their parents. Now they learn from TV, and they need a cookbook to cook at home. Health-oriented cookbooks also are becoming more important.

Q Can you tell us about the Best Cookbook in the World for 2010?
A It's called *Me'a Kai*. That means "Come and eat!" in Samoan. It's a book of real recipes from six South Pacific islands – a culinary world that most people don't know. It shows how luxury restaurants can get fresh, local ingredients instead of importing them from abroad. It's a benchmark for food all around the world because it links local food to international tourism, and that is the future of food.

Q What's it like living with the name Cointreau?
A It opens a lot of doors. I was taken to three-star restaurants by my parents and grandparents from as early as I can remember. I know the history of the best

restaurants in France, and I drink the best wines. I have a clear idea of what's best in Western food. But my family is very international. Ninety percent of Cointreau is sold outside of France.

Q Thirteen million bottles a year, no less. How do you account for the success of your family's business, thriving since 1849?
A There are two reasons: first, it's an extremely good product. Second, since the beginning, when my ancestors invented Cointreau, the family has devoted at least 10 percent of revenues to marketing. I mean since the 19th century. We've been taught to spend a lot of time and resources on marketing. It's inscribed in our thinking.

Q On your mother's side, you are related to Rémy Martin. What do you think of drinking Cognac in cocktails?
A I think the cocktail has saved Cognac in the United States, which is its main market. China and the East are the major market new sales with growth of 30 percent a year. In Asia, it's the high quality that counts, and the higher the quality, the better it sells.

Q Any advice to people who hope to brand their product the way your family has branded Cointreau and Rémy Martin?
A Today, there is so much emphasis on social media. Everything goes through people. You have to have an ambassador of the brand.

Q Cointreau had ambassadors like Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra and the Crown Prince of Monaco.
A Yes. My family was doing it years ago. You need ambassadors to show your product, and people today are looking for role models especially for young people.

Q Role models like rapper Snoop Dogg, the spokesman for Cognac?
A Well, yes. Let's take champagne as a different example. In China, the older generation will not drink champagne because it has bubbles and it's cold and you're not supposed to have it if you are into health drinks. But people under 30 drink champagne to express their rebellion against the older generation. The rap generation is doing the same thing. In Paris, in 1968, I was up on the barricades. Every generation is against the former one. You have to adapt your marketing to this conflict.