



Nicole Murphy

FINDS HER 'DESTINY' WITH PREMIUM SPARKLING WINE BRAND

It takes a certain amount of bravery, passion and resilience to travel to Europe as a 17-year-old to pursue a modeling career. But for Sacramento, Calif., native Nicole Murphy, it was simply a stepping-stone toward her journey as an entrepreneur and an early example of the perseverance, confidence and risk-taking it would require to be successful.

"It was a learning experience, and I don't have any regrets," says the 47-year-old businesswoman and VH1 *Hollywood Exes* executive producer and reality star. "I stayed in Paris for almost eight and a half months, and I ended up traveling to Milan, London, Germany and all these different places while I was there to do other modeling jobs."

With the support of her mother, who was able to accompany her for one month, and inspiration from fellow models such as Pat Cleveland and Beverly Johnson, Murphy landed modeling gigs with top designers such as Valentino, Christian Dior, Saint Laurent, Givenchy and Chanel. "It was a whole different world, but I always tell people that I think they should travel because learning about different cultures and seeing different things – it just opens up your mind more," she explains.

When she was 20, she met Eddie Murphy while attending the NAACP Image Awards, with whom she would eventually marry, have five children and later divorce.

"(After we got married), I'd still model a little bit, but not as much. And then eventually I had another baby – my son, Myles. And then another one came, and it was like, 'You're not working anymore,'" she says, laughing. "You need to stay at home with these babies."

After her divorce from Eddie in 2006, Murphy was ready to follow her own path. "It was just instilled in me to do something," she says. "I want to accomplish something. ... It's just in me, that drive. It was time for me to get out there and shine.

I had always been in the shadow of my husband. I was his support system, and you really didn't hear my voice. You didn't know me."

It wasn't until 2013 that Murphy would find her destiny – and in more ways than one. At the Essence Music Festival, where she was part of a women's empowerment panel, she was introduced to businessman Mark Thierry.

"I told her that I owned a beverage company and was developing a sparkling moscato," says Thierry, founder and CEO of Destiny, a registered brand trademark of his umbrella company Red Styxx Beverage LLC. "She immediately informed me that she loved moscato. She tasted the product and fell in love with it."

From there, conversations snowballed. Murphy quickly took to her new title as Destiny partner and brand ambassador, meeting with Thierry countless times to discuss the name, brand, bottle, logo and more. "We went through over 300 label options," Thierry explains.

The partners wanted to create something different from what's on the market today, something that tasted amazing, something that consumers could identify with and something that matched the glamorous lifestyle and messaging that Murphy represents.


"People really bond with Nicole as 'model, mommy and mogul.' Because of this, she becomes a role model and aspiration metaphor for the community about working hard, putting your best foot forward and committing everything you have to those around you," Thierry says. "At the time, Nicole was pursuing her dreams and her 'destiny.' The story behind the brand and the name Destiny literally fell into place."

The company offers two wines to choose from in their jewel collection: Ruby (a refreshing, sweet and light-bodied pink moscato) and Diamond (a

full-bodied golden moscato with complex aromas and citrus flavors).

"I can't be behind a product that I don't like. So, it's got to be something that you really, truly love," Murphy says. "We're just thrilled about it. ... And most moscos out there in the market today, their alcohol volume is 5 percent. Ours is 11.5 percent."

With Destiny's official launch in Texas in October 2014, both Thierry and Murphy have been working hard on expanding the distribution to places such as California, Florida, Louisiana and now Michigan, where as of press time, the two are planning a huge Motor City launch weekend full of parties, tastings, bottle signings and exclusive events this spring.

"I want to take Destiny to a different level," Murphy says. "I want to make it not just about the wine, the moscato, I want to make it a brand." 

— Audrey LaForest

welcome to the motor city

This past January was Nicole Murphy's first time visiting Detroit, where she was a special guest at the North American International Auto Show and host at Detroit Glamour, an NAIAS Charity Preview afterglow event.

While she was only in town for a short time, she was able to visit the Motown Museum, where she stood in front of the blue-and-white house and snapped a photo. "She has done tours when traveling internationally at some of the most historic locations," says Jamie Jackson, Nicole's executive assistant. "This had to be one of her top five tours."