



Celine Bossart Episode Transcript

Intro music plays.

Rashaun: Welcome to Shot Caller, the premium podcast. We're two parts, one part pop culture. Every other week we'll be bringing a spirited conversation with bartenders, artists, influencers, and anyone else who loves a good cocktail. I'm your host for Rashawn Hall, pop culture expert and a cocktail connoisseur, thanks to growing up in New Jersey bar

Lucinda: And I'm Lucinda Sterling. I'm a bartender and managing partner of Middle Branch in NYC. I'll be mixing it up with our guests and creating original cocktails for our Shot Caller fam. Stay tuned to the end of the episode for one-of-a-kind recipe inspired by our guest.

R & L: Cheers.

Rashaun: So Lucinda, rumor has it that today's guest and you gallivanting around Paris. Suddenly. I want to hear all about that.

Lucinda: Yes. I went to Paris on a trip with Hine Cognac and they sponsored us on a very beautiful trip. Unfortunately, I couldn't see most of the time because I didn't have any contact lenses.

Rashaun: Oh, there's a story there. Tell me more.

Lucinda: Fortunately, Celine also speaks French very well, very fluently and she was able to work an angle on getting some contact lenses from an optometrist out there so I could actually see and taste ,

Rashaun: So that's the benefit of going with someone, to go into a country with someone who speaks two languages that you really get to get a full perspective rather than kind of being the quote unquote ugly American or the, you know, the guy like me who uses Google translate and try to say things awkwardly to natives of that country,

Lucinda: Particularly in Paris, I think there are a lot of things that you can translate from word to word, but the feelings sometimes are lost in translation, so it helps to have somebody along the way.

Rashaun: In addition to being a French speaker and a good friend of yours, she is so much more than that. So let's welcome today's guest Celine Bossart. She is a New York-based, the spirits and travel writer and a digital media consultant specializing in the luxury lifestyle

realm. She's launched an independent travel series entitled The Staycationioners in collaboration with Taste the Style. Welcome to Shot Caller, Celine.

Lucinda: Hi, you have a great voice on radio too.

Celine: Thank you.

Lucinda: Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Celine: I'm a lot of things, but first and foremost, I'm a journalist in the spirit space. Um, I've been doing a lot of travel writing recently that's kind of come with, you know, my spirits writing bringing me all over the world. I've been extremely fortunate in where my job has taken me. I also do a lot of Instagram stuff. I launched my own travel series about three and a half years ago called The Staycationers. Um, and that has also kind of impacted my life in such a way that's brought me to cool places, had me working with really cool people and, and that's all sort of transpired on social media in conjunction with, with the actual content that lives on, on the web. Um, our new site, thestaycationers.com is launching very soon, so keep an eye out for that. Um, so those are two, two, well, three hats that I wear. Primarily.

Rashaun: Now, I first became familiar with your stuff via social and love, love the stuff you do as the person who was obsessed with social media myself. Um, tell me a little bit about what the impact of social has meant for your career.

Celine: So it has amplified everything I've done and I'm really grateful for, um, the positive effect that social media can have on, on all my work. Um, and on work in general. I also think that something that's been important to me through everything I've worked on, whether it's The Staycationers or my spirits writing or instagramming, everything I'm doing, a really important undertone for me or underlying theme rather has been just approaching everything through an intersectional feminists line of thinking. And for me, I'm particularly grateful to have a following on social media because that is something that I can turn to to amplify my messages for the greater good of our industry and just in general

Rashaun: Having been in the space, obviously, Lucinda and I talked about this a little bit with other guests. Obviously the hospitality industry, like so many other industries has been affected by the #metoo movement. Um, talk a little bit about, about being a woman in the hospitality space, or covering the hospitality space in what you've seen, um, have things evolved? Are things changing? What is your opinion now?

Celine: So, Lucinda, I feel like you could probably identify with this, but I feel like we work twice as hard to get to the same places that people at the top of the food chain get to. And when I talk about the food chain, I'm looking at this visual thing that I kind of always referenced when I approach certain social issues. So we have straight white men at the top of the food chain. They waltz through every single door, you know, and we have to work twice as hard and not just women but particularly women of color, people of color in general, the queer community. Basically anyone on the echelons below straight white

men. And so yeah, we have to bust our asses and it, it is what it is. But I think that every measure that we take to change that is a step in the right direction.

Lucinda: The doors that are closed are different from, you know, space to space and the particular part of that I encounter as a challenge is being a boss, Ms. Boss, just like you.

Celine: Boss Lady.

Lucinda: But it's hard for me to take a stance that's too sharp because there'll be some derision against me and then if I'm too soft then I'm, you know, not good enough. I'm not a good enough boss and I shouldn't have, I shouldn't have been there in the first place. So it's really hard to find that stance.

Celine: Yeah. It's, I think we are always kind of subconsciously trying to find balance in how we approach things. And that's like this built in thing that comes with being a woman or being any minority, I suppose. Again, it's unfortunate that that's the reality, but we're doing what we can, you know. Yeah.

Rashaun: And I think you guys are both doing obviously tremendous shot at. I mean, I think, you know, let's talk a little bit more on the positive side of that, about staycation or, and about being a boss and owning, taking ownership of your own brand.

Celine: Yeah, in a nutshell, I met Cindy Ramirez, who's the, who was the founder of Taste the Style and is now, um, a partner Chill House. I met her almost four years ago. This was around the time that I was really starting to build my social media and take social media seriously. And I went to this branch that I almost didn't go to because I was running late and I was just tired and it was early and whatever. But I went and I met, uh, Cindy. She was speaking on a panel. It was, it was actually, it was a panel for women in media. So again, this is something that's always been important to me. So I met her after the panel and I was like, Hey, I. This was also around the time that I had just started writing about drinks. And I was like, Hey, I'd love Taste the Style. I noticed that you don't have any cocktail content. I'd love to maybe contribute something and she's, she was like, yeah, absolutely, totally. So I just did. It was like a little roundup of egg white cocktails.

Rashaun: That's how you know things are meant to be. With this podcast is very much the same thing.

Lucinda: It just flows.

Celine: Yeah, right.

Rashaun: Let's just get this person. And everyone's like,

Lucinda: Yeah, sure.

Rashaun: So yeah,

Celine: It's amazing. Like it just kind of puts into perspective like you're not going to get anything unless you ask for it. And when you ask, sometimes you're surprised by the outcome. We've just did. I think our 60th staycation. Um, we're now in four cities. We're in New York, Miami, LA and Chicago. We are actually, we're, we're talking about collaborating with Speed Rack and doing a staycation with them, which I'm so excited about because it kind of gives like a deeper meaning to what we're doing. And I think that's so important.

Rashaun: And Lucinda tell everyone who may not know what Speed Rack is. I think you'd be the best person to explain.

Lucinda: Speed Rack is a female run, female driven and female populated competition for girls who are bartenders to make drinks as fast as they possibly can in the presence of other people, males and females alike. And they're judged very heavily by prominent, um, bartenders and other figures within the cocktail and spirits industries.

Celine: Yeah, it's such an amazing thing. And I'm just seriously like such a fangirl. And I, I think what they're doing is incredible. I also just love watching like all the guys, like be the bar backs for our girls because it's like, it's just such a fun dynamic to watch. It's like, okay, now you're, you're working for us now. And um, I love that. And I think what's really cool about that is we're seeing like all the men who are involved in Speed Rack in that capacity and in any capacity, they're just really supportive of this messaging, which is amazing to see because that's allyship. And I think that we really need that.

Lucinda: And hey, women know how to have a good time. That's Cindy Lauper.

Rashaun: I'm not, I'm not gonna argue.

Lucinda: Right? And, and, uh, the boys, when they're helping out, you know, they are enjoying themselves very much. It's not like they find it to be work.

Celine: It's so fun to watch.

Musical intro

Lucinda: Hey Shot Caller fam. Are you throwing a birthday party for somebody who is turning 21? Or how about watching the game at home?

Rashaun: Well, no matter what you're planning, the perfect party favor would be a nipyata. Check out nipyata.com. They have awesome pinatas that are filled with little nips, aka airplane bottles of liquor. It's perfect for the over 21 party. So go to nipyata.com and use the promo code shotcaller at checkout so they know we sent you.

R&L: Cheers.

Music fades.

Rashaun: So, uh, you, you talked about getting your start in cocktail writing. What is the first cocktail you ever tried?

Celine: Oh my God, that's really hard to remember. You know what? It was probably a cure while. Nice. I am half French. My Dad is from France. I grew up with an appreciation for, you know, all the things that he would drink just as part of his everyday routine. So cognac was a huge thing for him. He was always drinking cognac, a lot of red wine. I actually have a cousin who does St. Emilion, so I grew up with a, you know, a deep appreciation for red wines. Yeah. But I'm, I'm fairly positive it was a Coeur Royale.

Lucinda: And you said it well too.

Rashaun: Way better than I could ever say it.

Celine: It's um, it's champagne and crème de cassis, just a little.

Lucinda: And it's easy to make. Just don't put in too much cassis because it will--

Celine: So sweet.

Lucinda: Very sweet.

Rashaun: But it's delicious though.

Lucinda: Easy to make for weddings. Birthday parties.

Celine: And pretty. It's pretty color.

Lucinda: Yes. Beautiful color. Purple.

Rashaun: Purple is a pretty color. So any great cocktail stories as you've written about cocktails, learn more about cocktails, any. Is there a story that stands out to you as a....

Celine: Um. Oh my gosh,

Lucinda: Which is great as an advantage to being writer of hotels and cocktails. You get to try a lot and travel a lot. So yeah,

Lucinda: Absolutely. Um, you know, I'm really impassioned by cocktail history, the history of classic cocktails. Two stories that I have really loved. The first of which was a gigantic, insanely long history of 75 classic cocktails for Elle Decor. They approached me with the assignment and I was like, this is insane, but I'm up for the challenge. I think unedited. It was around 16,000 words. Um, yeah.

Rashaun: And how long did it take you to write that?

Celine: Oh my God, I was traveling at the time and I just remember like, I was in France, I was not sleeping. I was like, so my family is from Dunkirk, which is like, you know, it's on the northern coast. It's like totally not cosmopolitan at all. Um, so I was like scrounging around for like materials, cocktail books. I found one which was like totally not helpful, but I was just buying books on kindle and Amazon, trying to research where I could not sleeping. It was dark. But it was an amazing crash course in having this fundamental basis of knowledge in terms of just general cocktail history and also having that context again for like things that we're drinking every day. So that was, that was a lot, um, but in a kind of way it was cool. And then I wrote a piece shortly thereafter for town and country I was going to TAILS for the first time and I was so starry eyed and so excited about really just embracing a cocktail culture in New Orleans. And I was like, what better way to do that than try every single classic New Orleans cocktail and write about it. So I think there were 16 or 17 that I identified and I went to every single place

Rashaun: Doing God's work. Just doing God's work. I hear you.

Celine: Yep, exactly. Somebody has to do it. Um, I'm really into photography. So I shot all of these cocktails myself. I tasted all of them, I researched all of them, I interviewed all these people and that was just such a fun piece to put together. And again, this is all kind of contributing to my knowledge as a writer and as a woman because again, we have to kind of prove our knowledge all the time. Right?

Lucinda: For sure.

Celine: So, yeah, my party trick is just like spitting, you know, cocktail facts, cocktail history tidbits in front of, um, you know, white men. So they take me seriously.

Lucinda: Yeah. Yeah. White men and women and um, all the bartenders that know so much. But don't, you probably know more than a lot of bartenders do these days.

Celine: I try to stay super humble, but I think just having worked in this industry as a writer for, for years now, um, I like to think that I have a really solid fundamental skill set and knowledge, um, about the subject. So yeah, I think it's important to put your money where your mouth is, especially when you're faced with people who aren't going to give you that right off the bat and give you that benefit of the doubt.

Lucinda: Good for you, man.

Celine: Thanks.

Musical intro.

Lucinda: So you're ready to make one of Shot Caller signature cocktails. But you don't have all of your ingredients.

Rashaun: That reminds me I need a bottle of bourbon. Can I get a bottle from you?

Lucinda: No, I can't lend you one. I don't have any to spare, but you can get your own from our friends at Saucey. They'll deliver whatever spirits, beer, wine, or mixers you need directly to your door.

Rashaun: Well, that's rude. But you can go to Saucey.com. That's s-a-u-c-e-y, or download the Saucey app today in the app store on Google play.

Lucinda: Remember to use our special code ShotCaller. All one word.

R&L: Cheers.

Music fades.

Rashaun: So do you have a favorite cocktail history story?

Celine: I love the story of Singapore Sling. And I think it's so relevant to the things that we've talked about and the things that I think about every day as a woman and as crusader, I like to think I'm a crusader. So the Singapore Sling was invented by this lovely man who was heading up the bar at the Raffles Hotel in Singapore at the time, basically, the hotel was, and Singapore in general was populated by English businessmen who brought their wives. They were there long term for work. They brought their wives with them and their poor, sad wives were not allowed to drink in public. That was just the way it was at the time.

Rashaun: That is sad.

Celine: That's awkward. Terrible. And this, I forget, I forget the bartender's name, um, but he took it upon himself to create a cocktail that was so over the top and fruity and obnoxious looking that nobody would think there was alcohol in it. But in reality it's literally chock full of booze. Um, it's like a sexy Long Island Ice Tea.

Lucinda: Exactly. That's what I was going to say.

Celine: A cool version. So yeah, he created the Singapore Sling for in order to give women the opportunity to drink in public. And I thought that was really cool. Especially I just thought it was really progressive. And again, it's an example of an ally who made things better for people.

Lucinda: Well, I didn't realize that there was that angle to the story because the Raffles Hotel is just historic and usually that's what you hear the story told about, but it's, you know, that. But wow. Women get to drink in public now because of that drink.

Celine: Yeah. I love that story. And I also don't mind a Singapore Sling. It's a lot, there's a lot going on, but I think it's kind of delicious,

Rashaun: Honestly, I don't think I've ever had one. I need to rectify that.

Celine: I think in the name of equality you should, you should go have a Singapore Sling

Rashaun: I try to be an ally as best as I can.

Lucinda: There is the original and then there are a lot of versions and variations based on the availability of product and um, people who do have different palates.

Celine: So yeah.

Rashaun: So what is the original recipe of the Singapore Sling?

Celine: Okay, here's the recipe: One and a half ounces of gin, half ounce Cherry Heering a quarter ounce Cointreau liqueur, quarter rounds, Benedictine, four ounces pineapple juice, half ounce lime juice, a third ounce Grenadine and a dash of bitters.

Lucinda: So what isn't in there?

Celine: Exactly. So there's a lot going on in that drink, but I'm not mad about it.

Lucinda: Right. It's nicely balanced.

Celine: Yeah. Yeah.

Lucinda: You can imagine what ingredients they were using back then. They were probably more fresh and um, then they probably had to use, you know, little less in the way of science to make it all come together.

Celine: Even if I didn't like the flavor profile, I would probably still drink it just on principle.

Lucinda: Right. Because it was made for you. What do you think our role is in society as far as women in this industry?

Celine: In this industry? I think again, we just kind of have to keep fighting these daily battles that are in the name of our equality. I mean, the way that we approach things, um, we always should have in the back of our minds, like how can I do this in such a way that fosters a better environment for me and my, you know, female and fem-identifying sisters, especially those in, in further minority categories. Um, yeah, I think that. I think that we have to be conscious. It's in our interest to know

Lucinda: Always be alert, be conscious, be aware of everything that's going on around us. Be participant.

Celine: Vocal and unafraid and don't take anyone's shit. Especially people who are more privileged than you because it's such, it's such a slap in the face to be wronged by somebody who is more privileged than you, you know, and that's the root of like everything that we're fighting against, I think.

Celine: Wow. Okay. Very powerful. Thank you, Celine

Rashaun: Thank you. I mean, we should end on a high note. What, what, what are you working on next before we wrap this interview up? I know you said staycation.com and I'm so excited.

Celine: I'm so excited to launch this website. My team, which is mostly comprised of amazing, strong, smart women. We are just so ready to launch this site. We're so ready to kind of amp up our creativity, amp up our content, um, hopefully launch a few more cities and I want these women that I've been working with and that had been working on this for me. I want this to cater to be something that lifts them up and gives them an outlet to be creative. Gives them an outlet to take advantage of the perks that come with being in content creators and journalists. And so I'm really excited to see that sort of come to fruition a bit more. Having our own site is going to be just sort of like total freedom.

Lucinda: Okay. So how do you find your site and how do you find you?

Celine: So it's, it's thestaycationers.com. The instagram for The Staycationers is just @TheStaycationers. And then my personal instagram is @celineboss, Celine Dion. And then B, zero ss

Rashaun: Because you are a boss. Thank you so much. You're an inspiration, so thank you so much.

Celine: Thank you. I really appreciate that.

Lucinda: Yeah. Thank you for helping all of us.

Celine: Thank you for giving people a voice.

R & L: Cheers.

COCKTAIL RECIPE

Lucinda: Okay, so today in honor of our guest, Celine Bossart, we have created a drink that is kind of a riff on an egg cream, but for adults called The Dudette. She's mentioned that she likes egg whites, she loves chocolate. And she also loves aged rum. So all of those ingredients are in here. We're also using fresh orange juice, so we'll start with that. Half an ounce fresh orange juice, half an ounce of fresh lemon juice, three quarters of an ounce of simple syrup. That's one to one sugar, water. Three quarters of an ounce of blueberry chocolate vodka liqueur. Then we're doing half an ounce of espresso, so we'll dry shake all those ingredients together, make sure they mixed really well. Then right away and you're shaking ice to the tin and then shake away. Now strain those ingredients into a collins glass that has ice in it, neatly. This is going to have an orange wedge garnish.

Celine: That is so funny because lately I've been incorporating orange peel into all the coffee that I drink and it's the best, the best thing, so that. Yeah, it changes the game.

Celine: Totally different. Totally delicious. I love it. I'm going to drink this entire thing. Goodbye.

Lucinda: So Celine is drinking The Dudette, made specially for her.

Music fades.

Rashaun: Last call everybody.

Lucinda: I'm Lucinda Sterling.

Rashaun: And I'm Rashaun Hall. In the immortal words of Kanye West, "Here's a toast to the assholes."

Lucinda: Thanks for listening. Our theme song is "You Know You Want To" by Dan Phillipson. Our producer is Samira Tazari. The podcast is produced and distributed by Lantigua Williams & Co.

Rashaun: Big thanks to Middle Branch in New York City for letting us hang today. And thank you for listening. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @ShotCallerPod and use the hashtag #ShotCallerPod to let us know what you want to hear coming up, what's shaking, what's stirred, what's twisted, anything and everything we want to hear about it. And make sure you subscribe, rate, and review us on iTunes or Google Play.

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