

The Countdown Begins: 25 days of Black Biz

By **Tanisha A. Sykes** - December 1, 2018

December is finally here and tis the season to shop until you drop. This year, theGrio wanted to help make your gift giving experience even better by including purchases with a purpose. We've created a list of 25 Black-owned businesses that offer unique products and services perfect for your long list of family and friends. While it's super easy to take advantage of the deals supplied by big box retailers, we've made it even easier to support Black small business owners who are doing spectacular things online and right in the heart of their communities.

Black buying power is \$1.3 trillion according to the latest Nielsen figures. What's more, African American female-owned businesses are the fastest growing segment of entrepreneurs. In other words, we're doing the damn thang!

*With the holidays now in full swing, make **#BuyBlack** more than just another hashtag. Over the next 25 days, click through our special guide to find a spectacular list of Black-owned businesses to patronize. It's all about using our economics to bring power to the people Plus, we've got a slew of exclusive deals just for theGrio readers while you're all making your list and checking it twice!*

Day 6

When guests walk into The Cochrane House, they can expect a home away from home says owners and sisters, Roderica and Francina James. (Gavin Beckford Photography)

Company: The Cochrane House Luxury Historic Inn

Owners: Roderica and Francina James, 40 and 41, respectively

Product/Service: This year, why not make a getaway part of your holiday experience? Book a night or two for yourself or with your boo at this decadently quaint B&B owned by sisters Roderica and Francina James, which sits in the heart of downtown Detroit.

Coined, "Detroit's Downtown Diggs," this historic boutique inn, was once owned by a white state senator in the 1900s who owned one of the most extensive private libraries in The Motor City. Guests can enjoy distinctive curated services like the Grown & Sexy Slumber Party including a four-course meal with a private chef and hot stone massages. Rates start at \$255 per night.

"When you walk into the doors you can feel the family atmosphere," says Roderica. "Our goal is to provide an atmosphere where the mind, body, and soul are relaxed."

Discount: Enter "thegrio25" to save 25% off at thecochranehouse.com until 12/31. For overnight stays only with breakfast included. Must book online.

Day 5

Hustling Spirit Clothing is the brainchild of LaKenya and Craig Linton. (Photo courtesy of the Lintons).

Company: Hustling Spirit Clothing

Owners: LaKenya and Craig Linton, 39 and 41, respectively

Product/Service: The dynamic duo created an edgy, sporty clothing brand six years ago, but wanted to ensure it made a statement that left customers inspired. They knew they were on to something when hundreds swarmed them after their first fashion show in 2013.

“Our mission was to create dope designs that edified God at the same time,” says LaKenya of her NJ based company. “They said the atmosphere changed when our line was shown.”

Choose one of the 25+ designed products at Hustling Spirit for the fashionista in your life this holiday, including their bestselling leggings, jackets, travel bags, and T-shirts. With the swag comes a card that offers a message of hope, love, and spirituality.

Discount: Enter “HSTHANKYOU” for 10% off your purchase at hustlingspirit.com/shop.

Day 4

Aleah Rae Dorsey of LIPP Beauty (Photo credit: Marta Skovro)

Company: LIPP Beauty

Owner: Aleah Rae Dorsey, 37

Product/Services: Create a lip color only Y-O-U will rock at this year’s company holiday party. The ready to wear lipsticks and lip care tools are custom-made and cruelty-free. Seasoned make-up artist, Aleah Rae Dorsey presents LIPP Beauty, a line she created that offers over 1,000 color combinations and infinite handmade lipstick shades.

“We pride ourselves in specializing in shades that flatter unique skin tones and making products from scratch based on things that empower, motivate and inspire individuals,” says Dorsey of her Washington DC based company.

Discount: Enter “thegrio” for 20% off your total purchase, plus FREE domestic shipping at lippbeauty.com.

Day 3

Chinelo Chidozie (left) and her sister-in-law Ndidi Obidoa are co-owners of The Bolden Company

Company: The Bolden Company

Owners: Chinelo Chidozie, 40, and Ndidi Obidoa, 40

Product/Service: These Nigerian sisters-in-law are on a mission to fight hyper-pigmentation—

dark spots due to sun damage—with a skincare line that specializes in unique products for Black women.

Get your glow on for the holidays or give the gift of glow with their Skin Brightening Toner, which is the best-seller for the Calabasas, California, company because it's gentle, improves the skin's texture, and gradually fades dark spots.

"As people of color, it's critical to have a seat at the table because it includes our experiences, which tend to be a blind spot for many businesses," said Chidozie.

Discount: Enter "thegrio" for 20% off your purchase at boldenusa.com.

Day 2

The Bark Shoppe's Melissa Mitchner. (Photo Credit Phyllis Kwentoh)

Company: The Bark Shoppe

Owner: Melissa Mitchner, 32

Product/Service:

About half of all dog owners and about 39 percent of cat owners purchase gifts for their pets during the holiday season, according to the 2017 American Pet Products Association's National Pet Owners Survey. Why not celebrate Fido or Frida with full grooming service so your fur baby can look its best?

The Harlem [pet care facility](#) has been grooming, boarding, and providing fabulous pawdicures since 2013. With \$250,000 in revenues in 2017, customers rave about the dog-grooming services.

"We are attentive, efficient, and don't keep your pet all day," says Mitchner, who reduced grooming time from four hours to two compared to competitors. "There is absolutely no reason to have to leave your community for the level of service you deserve."

Discount: Enter "thegrio" at thebarkshoppe.com for a complimentary toothbrushing with all bathing services, plus 20% off all products and graphic tees.

Day 1

Alfonso Wright and Jamila McGill of Brooklyn Tea.

Company: Brooklyn Tea

Owners: Alfonso Wright, 37, and Jamila McGill, 30

Product/Service: Tea is sipped all over the world, yet, there are less than 15 black-owned tea companies in the U.S. But [Brooklyn Tea](#), launched three years ago, is changing the game with a

new retail shop in Bed-Stuy in January. Bestsellers include Kyoto Cherry Rose, an aromatic flavor made from rose petals blended with Japanese green tea. Their teas are sold online and in five locations across Manhattan and Brooklyn.

According to the duo, ownership is the key to lasting success: “We cannot have cooperative economics without Black entrepreneurship.”

Discount: Enter “Grio” for 20% off your purchase at brooklyntea.com.

Tanisha A. Sykes is an award-winning writer and editor specializing in personal finance, small business, and careers-related content. Follow her [@tanishastips](https://twitter.com/tanishastips). Special thanks also to the folks at *Official Black Wall Street* and Black-Owned Brooklyn for their assistance in curating this list.
