

# Got Rum?®

APRIL 2026

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**COOKING WITH RUM · ANGEL'S SHARE  
CIGAR AND RUM PAIRING · THE RUM MIXOLOGIST  
THE RUM HISTORIAN · THE RUM LABORATORY  
RUM IN THE NEWS · THE SWEET BUSINESS OF SUGAR**



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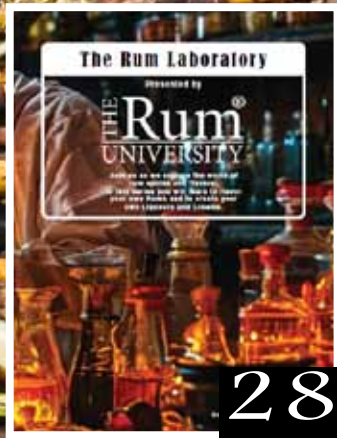


THE RUM  
Mixologist

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# Got Rum?®

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FRONT COVER: Fire and Ice  
INSIDE SPREAD: Fire and Earth

# FROM THE EDITOR

## *April's Showers*

The month of April, associated in the Northern Hemisphere with the earth reawakening after winter, often brings the spring storms that inspired the famous proverb, “*April showers bring May flowers.*” This proverb explains weather and nature cycles that have existed since before humans. It was most likely modernized from the line “*Swéete April showers, Doo spring Maie flowers*” from a poem by 16th-century author, Thomas Tusser (*A Hundred Good Points of Husbandry*).

The name April comes from the Latin “*Aprilis*,” likely related to “*aperire*,” meaning “to open,” a nod to spring’s arrival. The month’s name has also been attributed to *Apru*, which is Etruscan for the Greek goddess *Aphrodite*, associated with love, beauty and fertility.

Regardless of the origin of its name, its current position in the modern calendar places it as the gatekeeper of Quarter 2. It is hard to imagine that Q1 has already washed off and that the second half of the year is marching towards us with vengeance!

The headlines around us continue to highlight distilleries, breweries and wineries facing financial challenges. There is also talk about a mega acquisition (in the form of Pernod Ricard acquiring Brown Forman), and a few stories of success and hope, as few brands open new facilities and/or visitor centers.

If you are a distilled spirits brand owner/operator, are you ready to “soak the rain” in April, to give birth to new ideas/products in May? Or are you waiting for a different type of reawakening that will propel you into the future?



In the rum world, the numbers in North America are clear: premiumization continues its upward trend, especially in the RTS and RTD markets. While some brands are -sadly- disappearing, new ones are replacing them almost as quickly.

Wishing that everyone survives the storms (real and metaphorical) and lives long enough to enjoy the flowers that will invariably follow.

Cheers!

Luis Ayala, *Editor and Publisher*

**LinkedIn** <http://www.linkedin.com/in/rumconsultant>

Do you want to learn more about rum but don't want to wait until the next issue of “Got Rum?”? Then join the “Rum Lovers Unite!” group on LinkedIn for updates, previews, Q&A and exclusive material.

# THE ANGEL'S SHARE

by Paul Senft



My name is Paul Senft - Rum Reviewer, Tasting host, Judge and Writer. My exploration of Rums began by learning to craft Tiki cocktails for friends. I quickly learned that not all rums are created equally and that the uniqueness of the spirit can be as varied as the locales they are from. This inspired me to travel with my wife around the Caribbean, Central America, and United States visiting distilleries and learning about how each one creates their rums. I have also had the pleasure of learning from bartenders, brand ambassadors, and other enthusiasts from around the world; each one providing their own unique point of view, adding another chapter to the modern story of rum.

The desire to share this information led me to create [www.RumJourney.com](http://www.RumJourney.com) where I share my experiences and reviews in the hopes that I would inspire others in their own explorations. It is my wish in the pages of "Got Rum?" to be your host and provide you with my impressions of rums available in the world market. Hopefully my tasting notes will inspire you to try the rums and make your own opinions. The world is full of good rums and the journey is always best experienced with others.

Cheers!

## Diplomático Planas Rum

Located in La Miel, Venezuela, Distilleries Unidas S.A. (DUSA) produces the Diplomático rum line. Using a combination of molasses and sugarcane honey as the base ingredient of their rums. After fermentation, they use a combination of column, pot, and batch kettle stills to distill the liquid that becomes the components of their rum blends. After aging their rums primarily in used bourbon barrels, they blend the rums to create the final product. For the Planas expression, the rum is a blend whose components are aged up to six years and then charcoal filtered and bottled at 47% ABV in Panama City, Panama.

### Appearance

The bottle is the standard short-necked 750 ml bottle that is used for the Diplomático line. The white and blue label shares the basic details of the rum. It also notes that it is named for a region of Venezuela located at the base of the San Andes mountain, where the sugarcane is grown for the distillery. The plastic-capped synthetic cork is secured to the bottle with a blue and white wrap. After it is removed, the image of founder Don Juancho Nieto Meléndez is revealed.

The liquid is clear in the glass and bottle, and swirling it creates a medium band around the glass. This band thickens and then slowly beads up and releases a single wave of legs before evaporating, leaving a ring of beads and residue around the glass.

### Nose

When I poured the rum into the glass, the aroma of rich floral vanilla filled the air. As the liquid settled, the vanilla note

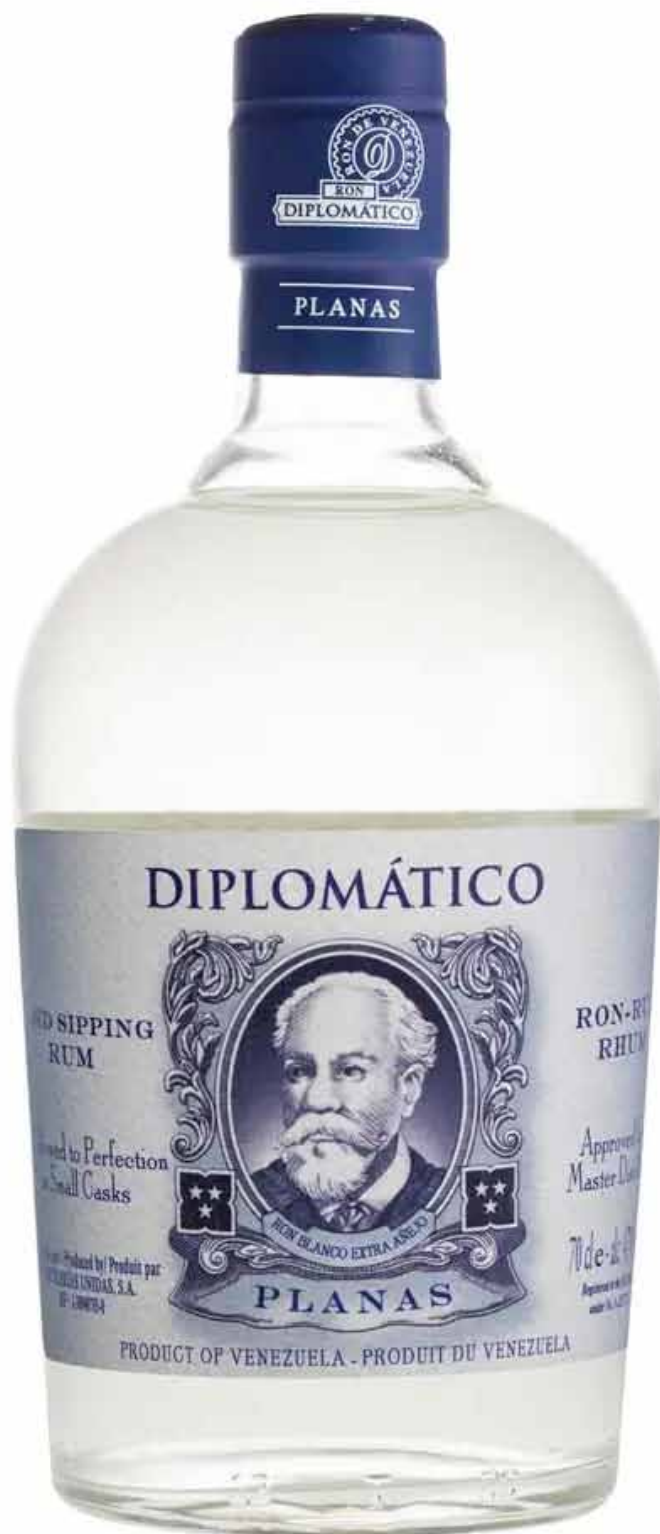
created the baseline, with notes of fresh-cut coconut, honeyed banana, a nip of citrus, black pepper, and roasted coffee bean rounding out the experience.

### Palate

The earthy vanilla and fruit notes, along with the swirl of alcohol, condition the palate with its initial rush of flavors. Additional sips have the vanilla note transition to more of a toffee note as the black pepper, roasted coffee, and oak tannins infuse the flavor profile. The fruit flavors rise and fall quickly, leading to a long toffee finish.

### Review

Anytime I review a rum in this age range, I have certain baseline expectations. Usually, a clear rum in this category might have a few notes for the imbiber to experience and leave a lot of room for the cocktail creator to build on. This rum provided surprising depth with a pleasant range of flavors to experience. I now have an improved understanding of why it performs so well in classic rum cocktails like Daiquiris and El Presidente, with the flavor hooks creating opportunities for it to work well with more modern creations. Perhaps the most interesting surprise is that the rum, while in the upper end of the price range of its category, with consideration of what the flavor profile delivers, is quite a bargain. An excellent example of what Diplomático rum blenders can create using some of the youngest rums in their aging facilities.



www.rondiplomatico.com

# THE ANGEL'S SHARE

by Paul Senft

## Mhoba Sihhenge Pineapple Rum

The Mhoba Rum distillery in South Africa, in partnership with Holme Cay Rum, collaborated to create Sihhenge Pineapple Rum. Sihhenge is the Siswanti word for pineapple, which is the dialect spoken by the Swati people who live in the Mpumalanga province that the Mhoba distillery is located in. The company harvests locally grown sugarcane, which they crush, and use the fresh-pressed cane juice to ferment with wild yeast. They then distill the liquid in their two custom pot stills before blending it with the juice of locally sourced Natal Queen pineapples. The blending and maturation process lasts two weeks before it is bottled at 43% ABV.

### Appearance

The rum bottle is in a short-necked 750 ml bottle with an interesting label that combines the imagery of sugarcane and pineapples. The liquid in the bottle holds a dark pineapple juice color and lightens slightly in the glass.

Swirling the liquid creates a thick band that releases a wave of thick legs before evaporating.

### Aroma

Pouring the rum in the glass generates a strong aroma of vegetal matter and pineapple cane. As the aroma settles, the pineapple note intensifies, with a salty, savory mineral note coming into play along with a vanilla note to complete the experience.

### Palate

It would be an understatement to say that the first sip delivers “the expected” pineapple flavor. The sip delivers an extremely robust cooked pineapple flavor with a rich spicy salty caramel component that lingers throughout the experience. Like the aroma, the vanilla note comes in at the end and helps deliver a flavorful, mineral-rich finish.

### Review

Over the years as a reviewer and judge, I have experienced quite a few pineapple rums. This is by far the most robust one I have had, which was a pleasant surprise from the nose to the finish. The savoriness of the flavor profile creates the potential for this rum to be a hearty cocktail component and presents an interesting tool for cocktail creators to work with.

Personally, I have no problem enjoying this rum neat but even mixing it with lemon-lime soda created an interesting flavor-filled experience. Currently this product is limited to a few states, but it's worth tracking down if you want to try something truly unique in this category.



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# COOKING WITH RUM

**Bringing the Spirit of the Cane  
Into the Heart of the Kitchen!**

by Chef Susan Whitley





# Lemon-Rum Blueberry Pound Cake

## Ingredients

### For the Cake

- ½ C. Whole Milk
- 1 Tbsp. Grated Lemon Zest, packed (see note)
- 2 Tbsp. Fresh Lemon Juice
- 2 C. + 1 tsp. All-Purpose Flour, spooned into measuring cup and leveled-off with a knife
- ¼ tsp. Baking Soda
- ¼ tsp. Salt
- 1 C. Frozen Blueberries
- 1 stick (½ cup) Unsalted Butter, softened
- 1¼ C. Granulated Sugar
- 3 Tbsp. Dark Rum
- 2 Large Eggs

### For the Glaze

- ¾ C. Confectioners' Sugar
- ¼ tsp. Lemon Zest, packed\*
- 1½ Tbsp. Fresh Lemon Juice
- 1 Tbsp. Dark Rum

### **Directions**

1. Place an oven rack in the middle position then preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Spray a 9x5-inch metal loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper, then spray the pan again.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the milk, lemon zest, and lemon juice. Let sit for at least 10 minutes. Mixture will start to curdle. While this is resting, in a medium size bowl, whisk together



the 2 cups flour, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.

4. In a small bowl, toss the blueberries with the remaining teaspoon of flour. Set aside.

5. In an electric mixer bowl, fitted with the paddle attachment (or beaters), cream the butter, sugar, and rum on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 2 to 3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, then beat in each egg one at a time, beating well after each one. Scrape down the sides of the bowl again. With the mixer on low speed, beat in a third of the flour mixture, then half of the milk mixture. Repeat this same process two more times, scraping the bowl as necessary. Using a spatula, fold in the blueberries until evenly combined. Then transfer the batter into the loaf pan and smooth the top.

6. Bake for one hour or until the cake is golden brown and a tester comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool in the pan for about 10 minutes, then turn out onto a rack to cool completely. When the cake has cooled completely, transfer it to a serving platter.



#### **Directions For The Glaze**

In a small bowl, mix together the confectioners' sugar, lemon zest, lemon juice, and dark rum. Add more confectioners' sugar or lemon juice as necessary to make a thick but pourable glaze (like the consistency of honey). Spoon the glaze over the top of the cake, allowing it to drip down the sides. Let the glaze set for about 15 minutes before serving. Serves 8 to 10.

\*Note: You will need 2 large lemons for this recipe and be sure to zest them before you juice them!

Photo credit: [www.therecipecritic.com](http://www.therecipecritic.com)

# THE RUM Mixologist

A space devoted to the exploration  
of classic and new rum cocktails

THE RUM<sup>®</sup>  
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## What Is Mixology?

Mixology is the study and skill of inventing, preparing and serving cocktails and other mixed drinks. Mixologists are experts in this field, but mixologists' knowledge goes beyond memorizing basic cocktail recipes: it includes historical information, basic chemistry behind flavor combinations and a capacity for combining common ingredients in new ways.

Join us, as we explore the essential collection of rum cocktail recipes that every mixologist needs to master.



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# THE RUM Mixologist

This Month's Cocktail:  
High Horse

This cocktail was created by Shannon Tebay Sidle, while she was a bartender at New York's Death & Co. The High Horse is inspired by the famous historical figure George Washington, his Mount Vernon Estate and the Colonial flavors of that era, highlighting the influence of cherries in those early days of American history.

## Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 ounces Aged Rum
- 1/2 ounce Kirsch Brandy
- 1/2 ounce Cherry Liqueur
- 1/2 ounce Sweet Vermouth
- 2 dashes Angostura Bitters
- Garnish: Brandied Cherry

## Directions:

1. Add the rum, kirsch, cherry liqueur, sweet vermouth and bitters into a mixing glass with ice and stir until well-chilled.
2. Strain into a cocktail glass.
3. Garnish with brandied cherries on a skewer and -optionally- an orange peel.

A glass of amber-colored rum sits on a stack of old, worn books. The glass is partially filled and has a faceted base. The background is filled with the spines and pages of various books, creating a library-like atmosphere. The lighting is warm and focused on the glass.

# THE Rum<sup>®</sup> UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Reviews of books related to sugarcane, milling, fermentation, distillation, aging, blending and other topics related to the production or history of rum.

[www.RumUniversity.com](http://www.RumUniversity.com)

## The Ultimate Ecuadorian Cookbook 111 Dishes From Ecuador To Cook Right Now by Slavka Bodic

(Publisher's Review)

*There is nothing more soul-warming and satisfying than a home-cooked meal. Home cooking is very personal and, thus, makes food taste way more delicious. You pick all the ingredients that go into your dish. Play with the flavors to adjust it precisely to your liking until it is perfection. However, the same old recipes may get boring, even the most favorite.*

- *Have you been out of meal ideas lately?*
- *Do you enjoy trying new cuisine?*
- *Are you looking for nutrition and health-oriented recipes?*

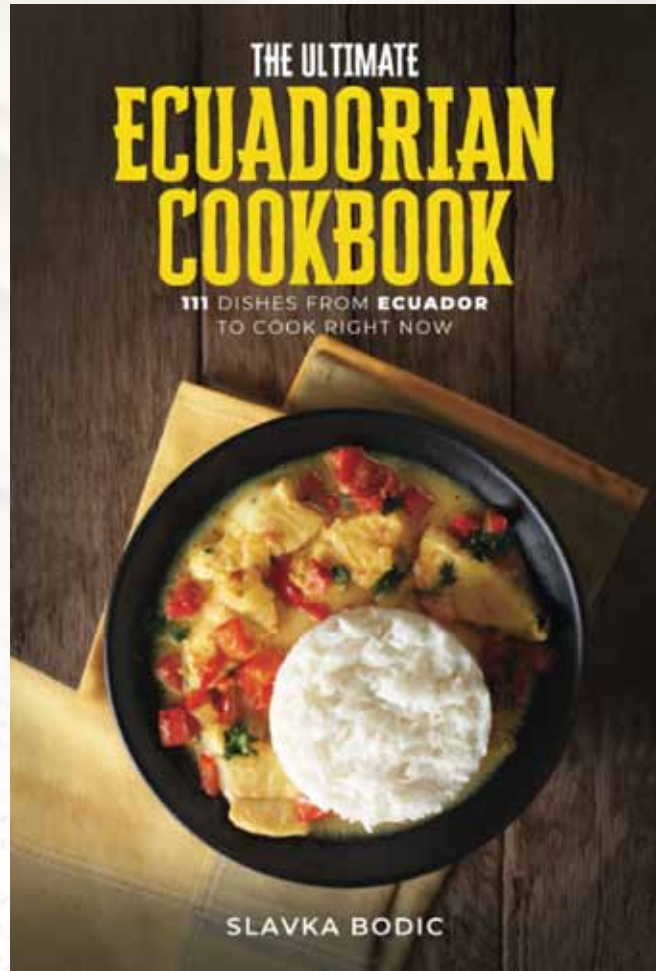
*If "yes" is your answer, then you are in great luck!*

*This ultimate cookbook offers you 111 best dishes from Ecuadorian cuisine.*

*The author lovingly chose the most traditional recipes. The meals that Ecuadorian mothers were making for ages. Well-balanced, delicious and nutritious dishes for any occasion and everyday cooking. Besides a plethora of fish, meat, poultry, and seafood options, this ultimate cookbook offers many vegan Ecuadorian recipes.*

*Don't be discouraged by a new cuisine. The recipes are simple, and ingredients are widely accessible. You don't need to be an experienced chef either to cook with this book. As it is thorough, detailed, and full of Latin American recipes are beginners.*

*From succulent ceviche, warm and cold salads to delectable desserts, the plethora of flavors will satisfy the most jaded foodie. Have a taste of a new culture with this traditional Ecuadorian*



*cookbook. Buy it now and discover new flavors. Visit Ecuador with this unique cookbook!*

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# Traditional Drinks From

# ECUADOR

## Mistela

Originally a Spanish drink, mistela is a cocktail that's traditionally infused with coffee, cinnamon, orange peel and clove, and added with aguardiente, which is considered the domestic alcohol of Ecuador.

Although you can find mistela anywhere in the country, the best concoctions can be found in Quito at Quesadillas de San Juan or La Cruz Verde.

Ecuadorians usually drink Mistela after lunch to finish a good meal.

## Canelazo

The drink got its name from the Spanish word *canela*, which means cinnamon. You will instantly taste that strong hint of cinnamon on your first sip.

Also called *cinnamon spiced rum*, canelazo is a must-try cocktail drink when you're in Ecuador.

This warm alcoholic beverage is traditionally served in family gatherings or parties, especially on cold nights.

Canelazo's primary ingredient is the locally made aguardiente and it is mixed with water, panela, cloves, cinnamon, orange juice, lime juice, and anise.

The alcohol content of canelazo depends on how much aguardiente is put into the mix.



You have to be careful not to get drunk when you just want to enjoy a nice cinnamon drink. People often make this mistake during Ecuadorian festivals in the Andes when it gets cool at night.

Some locals also make non-alcoholic versions of *canelazo* for the children to enjoy.

## Aguardiente

Aguardiente is the national drink of Colombia. However, it is also enjoyed a lot in Ecuador and other South American countries like Brazil, Chile, and Mexico.

You'll also find it in Central America, where it is in many Costa Rican drinks and known as *Guaro*.

What makes the aguardiente in Ecuador different from that of Colombia is that it is usually left unflavored.

The Ecuadorian liquor is also made from local cane sugar and contains 29-60% of alcohol by volume.

Aguardiente is similar to Tequila, which is taken as shots or mixed with fruit juices and cinnamon to make *canelazo*, which is a favorite Ecuadorian cocktail.

Since it is not aged, aguardiente cannot be considered rum.

But if it is placed inside a wooden barrel for a couple of years, then it becomes proper rum.

Zhumir is Ecuador's most popular commercial brand of aguardiente.

You can get it straight or also in flavors like lime, maracuya and other Ecuadorian fruit.

## Rompepe

If you love a good eggnog drink during Christmas, then you'll surely love its South America version called Rompepe.

This Ecuadorian Christmas drink is a take on the classic eggnog drink or Cuban *crema de vie*. It is made with milk, egg yolks, condensed milk, sugar, vanilla, orange peel, cream and aguardiente.

Rompepe is also called *Ponche de Leche* in some regions of the country.

Just be careful when drinking this seemingly innocent cocktail because it can easily make you drunk with its aguardiente content.

Source: [www.baconismagic.ca](http://www.baconismagic.ca)







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# THE RUM HISTORIAN

by Marco Pierini

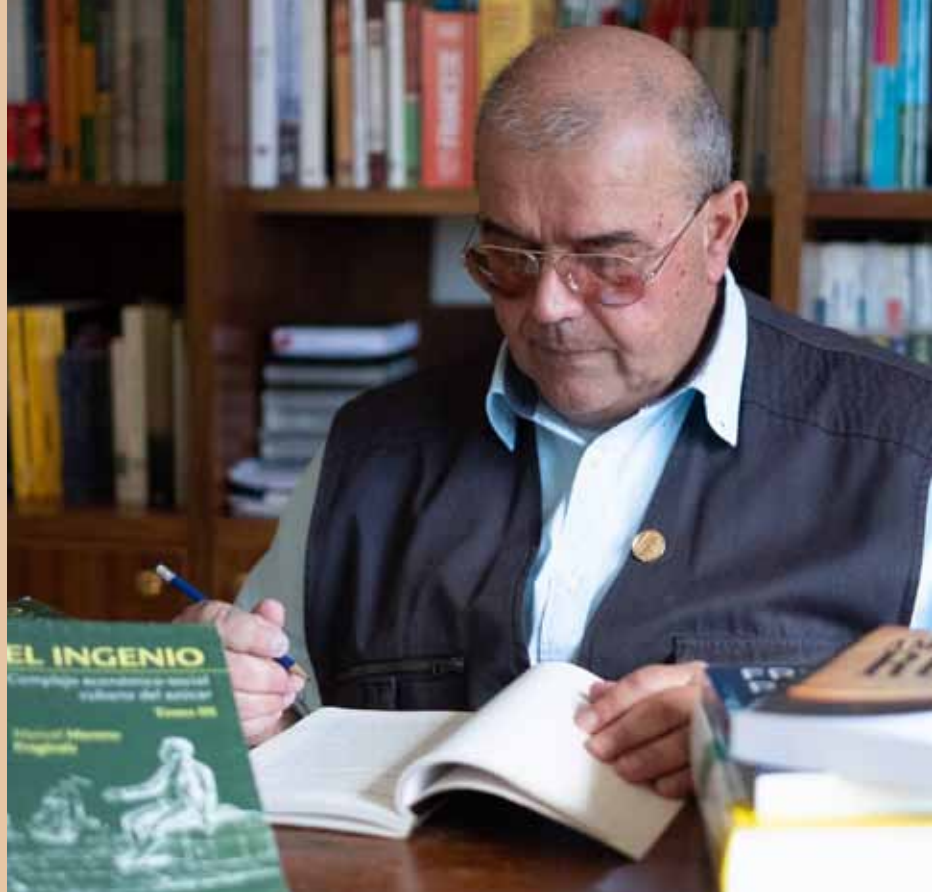
I was born in 1954 in a little town in Tuscany (Italy) where I still live. In my youth, I got a degree in Philosophy in Florence and I studied Political Science in Madrid, but my real passion has always been History. Life brought me to work in tourism, event organization and vocational training, then I discovered rum and I fell in love with it.

I have visited distilleries, met rum people, attended rum Festivals and joined the Rum Family. I have studied too, because Rum is not only a great distillate, it's a world. Produced in scores of countries, by thousands of companies, with an extraordinary variety of aromas and flavors, it is a fascinating field of studies.

Soon, I discovered that rum has also a terrible and rich History, made of voyages and conquests, blood and sweat, imperial fleets and revolutions. I realized that this History deserved to be researched properly and I decided to devote myself to it with the help of the basic scholarly tools I had learnt during my old university years.

In 2017 I published the book "AMERICAN RUM – A Short History of Rum in Early America"

In 2020, with my son Claudio, I have published a new book "FRENCH RUM – A History 1639-1902".



## HISTORY OF CUBAN RUM

### 31. LA FLORIDA "WHERE COCKTAILS ARE A REVELATION"

"More than over one hundred years ago – in the simple days of 1819 – a typical Spanish chophouse rose above the old city walls, at the entrance to Monserrate gate. It was a pleasant house of grilled windows that homed the beaux, musicians, army officers, attorneys, actors, and men of all nature, people of honor and fashion desirous of the delicious, tasty 'mixed gin' or cherry brandy.

In thier carriages, the ladies, under their silken parasols, sipped – while being courted by their gallant knights – glasses of the various refreshments peculiar to Cuba.

This ideal, venerated place was named 'The Silver Pine'.

Twas over a century ago!

At present – in the passage of time – 'The Silver Pine' that faces Albear square overlooking the old colonial streets full of the traditions of a splendid past of majestic heroism, has been renamed 'La Florida'.

Because the modern 'cocktail' is the poetry of liquor.

It is like the slender perfume of a rose. It is the essence of a delicious vibration. The fine crystal of the cocktail glass enables you to enjoy all the good that exists, leaving the hardships of daily life forgotten. The scenery is of unsurpassed beauty. Pain is unnoticeable. Love is sweeter and more tender.

The 'cocktail' is spiritualism! ... Important magazines in the United States and England wrote – at the beginning of the Dry Era – that, fortunately for the present and future generations, the art of the cocktail would remain, as did ancient culture in Europe during the invasion of the barbarians, safely revered in its most sacred temples, viz; The American Bar in Paris, facing the Grand Opera (at the rear of the Café de la Paix), and the Bar Restaurant La Florida in Havana, Cuba.

Today, - as a century ago – and situated over the same old stones of the 'Silver Pine', the Cathedral of the Cocktail where Constante officiates stands amid the streets of traditions for the delight of good drinkers and continues to be the gathering place of men and women who can distinguish the good wines and drink in extasy the essence of a cocktail – sweet symbol of a high and elaborate civilization.

'The Silver Pine', 'La Florida' café – 1819-1935 – through the ages, always the same ... 'Cocktails', Refreshments, Ices, Smiles, Flirtations, Happiness, Business, Efforts, Love. Over the same old stones. Facing the same scenery. Eternal, under the same warm, blue sky."

Some years ago a Mr. Ross Bolton, whom I don't know, but I wish to thank here, curated the reprint of a little, wonderful book "*Bar Florida Cocktail-s 1935*". From this booklet I drew the material presented above. In the course of my now extensive studies on rum and on drinking culture, seldom have I come across a text of such elegance, one so capable of evoking the pleasure not only of drinking well, but of living well, insofar as life allows. Presiding as High Priest over this Temple of the Cocktail was the most celebrated of Cuban bartenders; indeed, one of the most renowned anywhere, Constantino "Constante" Ribalaigua Vert. To him is attributed the phrase "*Where cocktails are a*



*revelation and food is most delicious*", from which I have taken the title of this article.

As our readers already know, see "ICE IN A HOT COUNTRY" published in the March 2024 issue, I am not particularly fond of cocktails. However, at this point in my History of Cuban Rum, I could not avoid dedicating some space to the legendary Golden Age of Cuban Cocktails and to its most famous establishment, La Florida. And I hope you won't mind revisiting one of the sources of the myth, the description of Constante at work, written in 1928 by Basil Woon in his seminal "*When it's Cocktail Time in Cuba*".

"The most famous bar for the sweet mixed drinks so popular with the Cubans is La Florida, behind the Asturiano Club on Montserrat Street. Drinks here, although the place has the appearance of an ordinary bodega, are as expensive as at the Sevilla or the Almendares. The bar, which is also a restaurant and grocery,

sprang into vogue due to the remarkable talents of the head barman, Constantino, a saturnine individual whose peculiar gift consists in his accurate, though seemingly casual, measurement of drinks. Six of you visit the Florida and order Mary Pickford. A boy is put to work squashing and squeezing the pineapple. Meanwhile another boy fills six glasses with ice to frost them. When the pineapple juice is ready Constantino pours it in a huge shaker, takes the Bacardi bottle and, without looking, pours a quantity in the shaker. Then, still apparently without a glance at the shaker, he does the same with the curaçoa or grenadine. The drink is shaken by throwing it from one shaker and catching it in another, the liquid forming an half-circle in the air. This juggling feat having been performed several times, Constantino empties the glasses of ice, puts them in a row on the bar, and with one motion fills them all. Each glass is filled exactly to the brim and not a drop is left over. It's worth a visit to Havana merely to watch Constantino operate. I told him that he could make his fortune in Paris. He smiled. "I no do so badly here", he said."

Anyway, if you want to know more about the Golden Age of Cuban Cocktails and the Havana Bar Scene, I recommend reading the excellent book by Jared Brown and Anistatia Miller "*Spirit of the Cane. The Story of Cuban Rum*" 2017. What I wish to emphasise here, however, is that that Golden Age was, to a significant extent, the product of the arrival and work of Spanish immigrants, figures such as Narciso Sala Parera who purchased, renovated and bestowed the new name upon La Florida in 1898 and, of course, Constantino Ribalaigua.

The dynamism of Havana's, and indeed all of Cuba's bars, restaurants and hotels is further reflected in the early organization of the workers in the hospitality sector. According to Manuel Bonera Miranda in his "*ORO BLANCO Una historia empresarial del ron cubano*" 2.000, "On January 9, 1912, the workers of these businesses made their first attempt to organize themselves, establishing the *Unión de Empleados de Café* (Bartenders Union), which—despite its name—brought together the employee of warehouses, restaurants, bars, hotels,

inns, and other similar establishments. The bartenders, for the moment, were included in it, although not very willingly. Most of them considered themselves specialized personnel and were paid accordingly. ... In those days, in fact, the Cuban art of Fine Drinking was beginning to take giant steps".

Then, Prohibition arrived.

"An American invasion was the reason why Cuban *cantineros* united. ...The very second Prohibition in the USA closed the doors of bars from coast to coast, a flood of American bartenders headed to Cuba to ply their trade. ... Not to be out gunned by American entrepreneurial enthusiasm, Cuban and Spanish businessmen who catered to American tastes opened American-style hotels, cabarets and eateries ... What every one of these new Havana establishments promised its growing customer base was American service, real American cuisine, real American drinks, and staff that spoke American English.

Cuban barmen heard the call for action. ... Bartenders met, on 9 May 1924, in the billiard room at the Hotel Ambos Mundos to compile a series of regulations written by Manuel Blanco Cuétara and drafted by attorney Manuel Zavala. After a couple of interim meetings, the final version of the organization's charter was approved by the government on 27 June 1924, registering *El Club de Cantineros de la Republica de Cuba* ... within six months, the club recruited 121 members. The membership had funding for a meeting house at Malécon N° 15 and attempted in those early days to publish a magazine. But political infighting and outside agitation from other hospitality unions kept the fledgling group from making any serious advances. It also didn't help that when President Machado took office, in 1925, he was hostile to any type of labour organization. ... Visible signs of a welling pride in the profession of cocktail emerged, Cocktail books were published." (J. Brown, A. Miller "*Spirit of the Cane*"). Another indication of the growing importance of the *Club de Cantineros* was its role in organising, in Havana in 1935, the first National Cocktail Competition.

As I have already noted, nothing in a good book is ever superfluous. Here, therefore,

are several additional excerpts from Basil Woon's "*When It's Cocktail Time in Cuba*" 1928, specifically concerning the influx of American bartenders.

"One of the curiosities among Havana bars is Donovan's, back of the Telegrafo Hotel. Donovan was proprietor of a bar in Newark, New Jersey, when prohibition came. Most of the other saloonkeepers in Newark swore a little, then philosophically either closed their places, turned bootleggers, or sold soft-drinks. Not so Donovan. That Irishman had been had been too long in the saloon business to quit it then. So he packed up his entire bar – chairs, tables, hanging sign, mirrors and bar itself – and moved it down to Havana. Newark people entering the place rub their eyes and feel transported backward ten years."

And finally, here is how, much later, Hector Zumbado in his "*El Sexto Sentido del barman*" published in 1980, evoked the atmosphere of those years.

"It is really in the joyful and effervescent 1920s that the cocktail reaches its full blossoming in Cuba. The Prohibition Act enacted in the United States in 1919 ... is a factor of primary importance in the development of Cuban mixology. ... This is how many bartenders arrived in Havana, not only from the United States but also from other major tourist centers, such as Eddy Woelke, who came from Paris, and Fred Kaufman, from the Canary Islands. This fusion of international professionals with Cuban bartenders—most of them of Spanish origin—would create a school, a distinctive style of mixology—Havana style, Cuban style—that would in turn enrich world cocktail culture in extraordinary ways."

I would now like to set cocktails aside and briefly lift our gaze toward Great History, drawing on two particularly insightful observations by Woon, who was a remarkably perceptive visitor.

The first seems to me especially valuable for understanding the formation of Cuban national identity: "It must be realized that the Cuban is a race apart. A Cuban is more a Cuban, if anything, than an American is an American. He has as distinct an individuality as he has a nationality. It may at times be difficult to distinguish between Panamanian,

Honduran, Ecuadoran, Costa Rican or Venezuelan, but he Cuban, as the Mexican, stands alone. That is why patriotism to the Cuban is such a precious thing. It is a nationality christened by the blood of thousands to whom 'Cuba' meant 'Mother'. Their blood is Spanish, but Spanish far removed. The blood of Cuba came from the heroic days of Spain. The temperament of the Cuban, then, is gay, amorous, generous and sentimental. ... He is most serious when he is speaking of his country; sentimentally, Cuba to the [male] Cuban is mother, wife, mistress and child."

The second, by contrast, touches directly on the structural weakness of the Cuban economy, a theme that, unfortunately, is more dramatic today than ever: "Ninety percent of what Cuba eats could be raised in Cuba, but ninety percent of what she eats is imported. The soil surrounding Havana is among the finest in the world; even two crops of potatoes a year are possible; yet most of the vegetables used come out of cans. Cuba even imports tropical fruits, of which she has the largest variety of any country except Mexico."

#### POST SCRIPTUM

Nostalgia for the past is widespread. This is hardly new; even in Ancient Greece people longed for the Primordial Golden Age. As far as rum is concerned, such nostalgia makes little sense, see *THE GOLDEN AGE OF RUM* in the December 2020 issue. But even with regard to life more generally, I believe we should exercise greater caution.

"From Camagüey eastward the road runs through monotonous miles of sugar-cane. Hour after hour the vista hardly changes. ... At every station children besiege the train, selling fruit, candies newspapers and lottery-tickets. The train passes many settlements of Haitian cane-cutters, black as coal and almost as naked as Adam and Eve – certainly their habits of living must approximate those of our first parents. If you ever feel tempted to think the Garden of Eden a fine place, take a look at these Adams and these Eves." (Woon)

Marco Pierini



THE Rum<sup>®</sup>  
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Got Rum? April 2026 - 28

# The Rum Laboratory

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Join us as we explore the world of  
rum spices and flavors!  
In this series you will learn to flavor  
your own Rums and to create your  
own Liqueurs and Creams.



## The Rum University® Laboratory

Presents

# making your own Coffee & Orange Chocolate Rum Liqueur

Few ingredients have the alluring and enticing power of coffee, oranges and chocolate. Putting them together in the form of a liqueur produces something simply sublime. Here is an easy recipe for you to experiment. Try using different types and proportions of coffee and chocolate until you are satisfied that you've reached perfection!

### Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups of strong coffee. Start by combining water with 6 tablespoonfulls of ground coffee in a French press, then filter.
- 1 cup Water
- 3 cups Granulated Sugar
- 1/3 cup Chocolate Syrup
- 2 tsp Vanilla Extract
- 3 Tbsp Orange Essense or 1/2 cup of Orange Liqueur
- 1 1/2 cups White Rum, medium or heavy-bodied, at 40% ABV



## Procedure

Combine the sugar and the water in a thick pan and bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly to prevent burning or caramelization of the sugar.

Once all the sugar has been dissolved, turn off the heat and let the mixture cool down. Transfer the syrup into a large glass jar (1 gallon or larger). Add the remaining ingredients and stir until they are all thoroughly combined.

Store the container in a cool, dark place and let it sit there for 2 to 4 weeks. Rack or filter if you want to remove sediments.

# RUM IN THE NEWS

by Mike Kunetka



These are the most recent and noteworthy headlines in the rum industry. If you want us to share your news with our readers, please send me an email to: [Mike@gotrum.com](mailto:Mike@gotrum.com).

## FLOR DE CAÑA

To celebrate 135 years of family legacy, Flor de Caña has introduced a refined new design across its premium rum portfolio. A bold evolution that honors its volcanic origin, five-generation heritage dating back to 1890, and long-standing commitment to sustainability and quality. More than a visual update, the new identity marks an exciting milestone for the brand. The redesigned packaging elevates Flor de Caña's premium presence around the world while bringing its story, craftsmanship, and purpose closer to consumers, allowing them to enjoy a world-class spirit that reflects both authentic heritage and responsible practices. The bottles have been redesigned to be 18% lighter, helping reduce environmental impact and transport-related emissions. The packaging is also fully recyclable and produced using vegetable-based inks with less paper waste during manufacturing, thoughtful improvements that allow consumers to enjoy their favorite rum with a lighter footprint. At the same time, the new look enhances the brand's storytelling and premium character, highlighting elements such as Flor de Caña's Carbon Neutral certification, its

distillation with 100% renewable energy, and its internationally recognized quality awards. Refined finishes celebrate the brand's craftsmanship and ultra-premium positioning, with details such as the wooden stopper, a nod to aging in American white oak barrels, and the signature green belt symbolizing Flor de Caña's historic commitment to sustainability. While the visual identity evolves, the rum itself remains unchanged. Each expression continues to be naturally and sustainably aged at the base of an active volcano, without sugar or artificial ingredients, delivering the same authentic taste and quality that has defined Flor de Caña for generations. The new portfolio design began rolling out in the U.S. market in January 2026 and is now available in major retail stores and on the Flor de Caña website: [www.flordecana.com](http://www.flordecana.com)

### **COCA COLA and BACARDI**

BACARDÍ & Coca Cola have teamed up once again in the UK to unveil a twist on the classic pairing, a BACARDÍ Spiced & Coca Cola combo, the perfect go-to-sip for the Spring and Summer seasons. BACARDÍ Spiced & Coca Cola arrives just as these moments gear up, ready to turn up the energy. Timed perfectly, the launch reflects a growing appetite for ready-made cocktails, which deliver premium, bar-quality experiences at effortless convenience. The iconic duo with BACARDÍ Spiced rum, hints of vanilla and warm spices, expertly mixed with refreshing Coca Cola, delivers an adventurous new flavor profile. It's the classic combination consumers have loved for over 125 years, since the very first Cuba Libre was mixed in Havana. Now, this exciting iteration is designed to add a little extra fizz to any occasion. Spiced is a new addition to the already much-loved BACARDÍ & Coca Cola ready-to-drink offering, which was awarded Product of the Year 2026 earlier this year. Ioanna Topali, Marketing Director Alcohol Ready to Drink at Coca Cola, "We are incredibly excited to introduce BACARDÍ Spiced & Coca Cola, a truly dynamic addition that speaks to the evolving tastes of today's consumers. Our collaboration with BACARDÍ ensures we consistently deliver premium quality and ultimate convenience, fostering refreshing moments of connection. The ultimate hassle-free, premium cocktail experience, BACARDÍ & Coke truly elevates any gathering." European Regional Brand Director, Bacardi Rum, Tjalling Simoons added "We're seeing strong momentum in ready to drink cocktails as consumers look for premium experiences without compromise. BACARDÍ Spiced & Coke builds on the strength of an iconic partnership, introducing a spiced flavor profile that feels both contemporary and true to our heritage. It marks an exciting next step in making bar quality serves effortless, without compromise on taste." BACARDÍ Spiced & Coca Cola® is available now in Great Britain, at major retailers nationwide in 250ml cans.

<https://www.coca-cola.com/gb/en/offerings/bacardiandcoke/product>

### **NICOYA RUM**

LES BIENHEUREUX announced the official U.S. launch of NICOYA, the first single-estate rum of Costa Rica. Beginning March 2nd, NICOYA will be available in Total Wine's active states, online and in store. After a successful European debut in 2024 with leading distribution partners, NICOYA recorded triple digit growth during its first year of international expansion. The brand now enters the U.S. market, bringing a new origin to the rum category. Born in the Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica, NICOYA is the first Costa Rican rum produced entirely on a single estate. NICOYA is produced from sugarcane grown, distilled and aged on the same property, ensuring full control from cane to final blend. NICOYA is crafted from Costa Rican sugarcane and blended from three traditional rum bases, fresh cane juice, sugarcane honey and molasses, each distilled separately before blending to preserve the character of each component. The project was initiated by Alexandre Sirech, Co-Founder & C.E.O. of LES BIENHEUREUX, formerly C.E.O. of Havana Club International. "After leading one of the world's most iconic rum houses, I wanted to identify the finest sugarcane terroir of the planet. Costa Rica stood apart. A free rum, born in a free country. Among fifteen candidate countries, Costa Rica offered exceptional agricultural quality, political stability, and the opportunity to build the country's first fully integrated single estate rum distillery. At Miami Rum Congress, we felt a strong appetite for origin. One country. One estate. Full traceability from sugarcane to final blend. Our fruit expressions were very well received. Costa Rica is the world's leading pineapple producer, and our Pineapple reflects that identity. Passion Fruit expresses the vibrant character of maracuyá, balanced by rum structure. The category is moving to origin, transparency, and fruit." The range launched in the U.S. will include: NICOYA Blanco (40% ABV), NICOYA Añejo (40% ABV, Aged in bourbon barrels from Kentucky), NICOYA Pineapple (37.5% ABV, Infused with pineapple) and NICOYA Passion Fruit (37.5% ABV, Infused with maracuyá/passion fruit) <https://lesbienheureux.com/>

### **RUMS OF MEXICO**

Commonly noted as the world's most diverse spirit category, rum is made in nearly every region on the planet. In recent years some of the most exciting and unique sugarcane distillates have been coming out of Mexico, and the initial offerings from The Rums of Mexico are no different. They represent a selection of the country's finest makers of both traditional and modern cane spirits, which are often called

aguardiente, cañita, chinguirito, cañazo, or simply ron. With dozens of cane varieties, extensive terroir, and varying local production methods, this range shares just a slice of the beauty to be found amongst The Rums of Mexico. Their first offerings include:

- **CALDO** by Orlando Vásquez in Tlaltetela, Veracruz. A second-generation cane farmer and first-generation aguardiente producer, Orlando and his family have historically focused on the production of panela. Just over a decade ago, Orlando decided to experiment with the distillation of rehydrated Panela as well as fresh pressed cane juice, and he has spent the last few years perfecting his craft. Orlando Vásquez crafts this aguardiente from the fresh juice aka “caldo” of two cane varieties, 290 and CP421, prized for their high sugar content and quick growth. He uses a four-plate, continuous copper still heated by firewood. CALDO is bottled at 52.3% ABV.
- **CAÑA CRISTALINA** by Marcos López in Cosautlán de Carvajal, Veracruz. A renaissance man in the agricultural sense, Marcos Lopez not only cultivates and distills cane but is also a coffee farmer, lime grower, and beekeeper. He learned the aguardiente trade from his grandfather and father, Marcos Sr, who made the family’s aguardiente still and also makes and repairs the stills of other local distillers. This regionally rare cane variety was farmed in the district of Cosautlán de Carvajal, Veracruz. Considered to be a delicate species that is susceptible to plagues, few farmers still opt to cultivate this uncommon varietal. Marcos distilled this batch from fermented Cristalina sugarcane juice with an open flame on a 5-plate copper and stainless steel still made by his father. CAÑA CRISTALINA is bottled at 49.4% ABV.
- **CAÑA CRIOLLA** by Pedro Bautista in Zoquiapam Boca de los Ríos, Oaxaca. Pedro is a second-generation aguardientero and one of the only aguardiente distillers in the region. He works with a small group of cane growers alongside the Río Monteflor. Cultivated by Daniel Vega Santiago, Caña Criolla is a yellow-colored, hearty cane variety that grows among columnar cactus and biznagas and is irrigated from water drawn from the nearby Río Monteflor. This rum was made from fresh cane juice that Pedro ferments in 1100-liter closed tanks, for periods that regularly surpass twenty days. He has been distilling on the same continuous copper 4-plate still for twenty years and historically has only sold to the local populace. CAÑA CRIOLLA is bottled at 51.9% ABV.
- **CAÑA DURA** by Marcos López in Cosautlán de Carvajal, Veracruz. Another rum from Marcos López. Prized for its resilience, the pale yellow-green variety is also referred to as Caña Fierro

and is the most common cane variety found in the municipality. CAÑA DURA is bottled at 46.4% ABV.

- **ELAZA CON MUCK** by Pedro Andrés and Jorge Nájera at the Satvrnal Distillery in Zapopan, Jalisco. The product of two first-generation distillers with a knack for experimentation and new flavors, Melaza con Muck is the debut of this mark from the Satvrnal Distillery. Inspired by the funky flavors of high ester Caribbean rums, Pedro Andrés and Jorge Nájera created their own recipe of muck and fermented it for 15 days with high grade molasses. They distilled that fermented mash in a copper hybrid still before bottling it at a 57.1% ABV. <https://www.pmspirits.com/>

### **HURRICANE MELISSA EFFECTS ON WRAY & NEPHEW**

Jamaican news source The Gleaner reported that Hurricane Melissa cost Campari, the Italian spirits company, €21 million (J\$3.5 billion) as the local operation, J. Wray & Nephew Ltd, suffered from a reduction in alcohol consumption, masking what would otherwise have been a stronger year. The storm disrupted local consumption and tourist traffic across the island in a season typically critical for the spirits industry. The company noted that production sites sustained minimal direct damage, limiting operational disruption, though reduced foot traffic from both locals and tourists weighed heavily on volumes in the quarter. Campari separately disclosed it donated J\$250 million (US\$1.6 million) to the Jamaican Government’s hurricane relief fund and local non-governmental organizations to support community recovery efforts.

### **HAMPDEN ESTATE**

Hampden Estate has released Hampden Fifteen, the distillery’s oldest expression matured under Jamaica’s tropical climate since the Hampden Estate started aging its’ rums on site in 2010. For the first time ever, Hampden is able to showcase its unique character thanks to such an extended period of barrel aging. The hot and humid conditions of the Estate’s warehouse concentrate esters and flavors to levels comparable to a 45-year-old whisky or cognac aged in Europe. This small batch carries an ester content of 200–400 g/HLAP at distillation, corresponding to an old mark first created back in 1952. Its aromatic profile, shaped by extended ageing in bourbon barrels, unveils layers of fruity, oily, oxidative, and delicately powdery notes. It is bottled at 50% ABV. <https://hampdenestaterum.com/>

### **RON DIPLOMÁTICO CHANCELLOR**

Ron Diplomático has unveiled Chancellor, the most exclusive rum in its history, with a limited edition comprising just 900 bottles worldwide.

This launch represents the culmination of years of expertise and tradition, crafted from the distillery's oldest and most prized reserves. The new rum is built around an intricate triple-cask maturation process, an approach designed to layer complexity and structure into the final blend. Diplomático's maestros roneros employed French virgin oak, American virgin oak, and seasoned American oak casks in succession, allowing each wood's influence to shape the spirit's character. The result is a rum that reflects both meticulous blending and the brand's philosophy of unhurried craftsmanship. Elena Petrov, Global Brand Director for Diplomático, describes Chancellor as a defining moment for the house. "Chancellor captures the very heart of our passion for craftsmanship," she explains. "It is a rare, unhurried masterpiece designed for those who understand that true luxury lies not only in the spirit itself, but in the story behind it."

<https://www.rondiplomatico.com/>

### CHANCELLOR'S TREASURED NOTES

To further enhance your Diplomático Chancellor tasting experience, an Oxford University professor has teamed up with a world-renowned Venezuelan composer to create a bespoke song that is 'scientifically proven' to enhance the taste of the ultra-rare rum. Sonic seasoning authority Professor Charles Spence applied his cutting-edge research into how sound influences flavor perception to inform a new track by pianist and composer Clara Rodríguez, designed to amplify the sweeter, richer, and more complex notes of Diplomático's limited-edition Chancellor rum. The collaboration is rooted in 'sonic seasoning' research, which explores 'cross modal perception', the idea that what we hear can prime the brain to notice certain tastes more strongly. By linking specific musical elements to taste profiles, the right soundtrack can 'dial up' sweetness, richness, and warmth. Spence, who partnered with Diplomático to celebrate the launch of Chancellor, said: "Flavor is never just on the tongue, and the right notes can transform how these are perceived by our brains. In this piece of Venezuelan music, we translated the rum's tasting notes into sound, so when people listen while they taste, the music gently nudges perception, making the rum feel richer, warmer, and more expressive." The four-minute song, titled The Chancellor's Treasured Notes, uses specific musical techniques to accentuate the nose, taste and finish of the Chancellor rum. The piece starts with longer, sustained tones by the piano to accentuate the butterscotch while the bass brings lower notes to compliment the tobacco aromas, as it has been found within sensory studies that lower pitched sounds accentuate bitterness. The cuatro and maracas are reminiscent of wind rustling through sugar cane plantations, establishing an evocative and sensory soundscape. Composer Clara Rodríguez, said: "Within this piece it was essential

for me to connect with our shared Venezuelan origins, which is the cultural and emotional foundation of everything I compose." You can hear The Chancellor's Treasured Notes on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3gvbWfN6D8>

### BLACK TEARS

Black Tears Cuban Spiced Rum has launched Race to Havana, a 26-part digital series designed to shift from traditional brand placement to active brand integration. The series follows six Cuban micro influencers divided into three creative teams who must travel 600 kilometers from the Black Tears factory, located outside of Ciego de Ávila in central Cuba, to Havana. The route takes the teams through Trinidad, Cienfuegos, Santa Clara, and Matanzas before concluding with a final sprint to Havana. A key element of the challenge is that the individuals must use Black Tears rum as their only currency for transportation and logistics. Henrik von Celsing, Creative Lead at Black Tears, told Spirit Business "The Race to Havana campaign is about moving from brand placement to true brand integration, where Black Tears is the engine of the story rather than a backdrop. By making the liquid the only currency for a long journey across Cuba, we've woven the brand into the fabric of a high-stakes story. This turns the audience from passive viewers into an active community that truly engages with every bottle traded and every kilometer gained." Three teams of two participated: a street artist and a tattoo artist, a DJ and a mixologist, and a stylist and a fashion model. The winners were awarded with a 'life-changing' investment in their creative careers. Black Tears' Race to Havana trailer is now available on YouTube and the @blacktearscubanspiced Instagram account, and a new episode will be released every 72 hours. Each leg will consist of three to four episodes, with each episode lasting one to two minutes. @blacktearscubanspiced, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAAxq3\\_6CKg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAAxq3_6CKg)

### TEN TO ONE

Ten To One has announced three new, limited releases:

- Oloroso Sherry Cask Select is a blend of rums from Barbados, Trinidad, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic that have been finished in Oloroso Sherry barrels and bottled at 43% ABV.
  - Triple Cask Reserve: Federation Blend No. 1 is drawn from exceptional 18-year casks from Barbados, Trinidad, and Jamaica and bottled at 46% ABV.
  - 18 Year Reserve Cask Collection: Trinidad is one of three single-cask expressions in the Reserve Cask Collection. It is drawn from an exceptional 18-year Trinidadian rum and bottled at 46% ABV.
- <https://www.tentooneerum.com/>



# The Sweet Business of Sugar



THE **Rum**  
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# Ecuador

Regardless of distillation equipment, fermentation method, aging or blending techniques, all rum producers have one thing in common: **sugarcane**.

Without sugarcane we would not have sugar mills, countless farmers would not have a profitable crop and we would not have rum!

**Required Report:** Required - Public Distribution

**Date:** April 15, 2025

**Report Number:** EC2025-0005

**Report Name:** Sugar Annual

**Country:** Ecuador

**Post:** Quito

**Report Category:** Sugar

**Prepared By:** Esteban Espinosa

**Approved By:** Robert Tuebner

**Report Highlights:**

Ecuador's sugar production in marketing year (MY) 2025/26 is forecast to reach 513,000 metric tons (MT), a decrease from MY 2023/24 estimate. Domestic consumption is forecast to remain stable with gradual increases expected in the coming years. Ethanol production is not expected to increase in the near to mid-term, industry is not able to cover the Ethanol demand to comply with the blend rate of 10 percent needed for ECOPAIS gasoline, opening the demand for imported ethanol.

## Sugar Cane for Centrifugal

Sugar Cane for Centrifugal Market Year Begins	2023/2024		2024/2025		2025/2026	
	Jun 2023		Jun 2024		Jun 2025	
	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post
Ecuador						
Area Planted (1000 HA)	100	100	100	100	0	110
Area Harvested (1000 HA)	74	74	99	99	0	108
Production (1000 MT)	5116	5116	6930	6930	0	7730
Total Supply (1000 MT)	5116	5116	6930	6930	0	7730
Utilization for Sugar (1000 MT)	4378	4378	5891	5891	0	6730
Utilization for Alcohol (1000 MT)	738	738	1039	1039	0	1000
Total Utilization (1000 MT)	5116	5116	6930	6930	0	7730
(1000 HA),(1000 MT)						

### Production:

The planted area for sugar cane in MY 2025/26 is projected to reach 110,000 hectares, reflecting an increase of 10,000 hectares compared to MY 2024/2025. Research from FAS Quito indicates that sugar mills and associated producers collectively manage between 90,000 to 92,000 hectares, with 80,000 ha allocated for sugar production and 10,000 to 12,000 ha designated for Ethanol production.

Eighty-two percent of the planted area consists of farms owned by mills in Guayas, Imbabura and Loja provinces, alongside farmers who supply these mills. In contrast, 18 percent is comprised of land owned by small producers of panela, alcohol and candy products. According to the National Federation of Ecuadorian Sugar Mills (FENAZUCAR), planted area for sugar production is expected to remain between 80,000 and 82,000 hectares in the coming years, with fluctuations largely dependent on weather conditions. The trend among small farmers in the coastal region to transition from sugar cane to other crops persists.

For sugar cane production in MY 2025/26, 99 percent of the total planted area is expected to be harvested, yielding approximately 7.73 million metric tons. This includes 6.73 million MT of sugar, “panela” and molasses, and 1.0 million MT for alcohol. Estimated yields for sugar cane are projected at approximately 70.2 MT per hectare, similar with those of MY 2024/25. Productivity on lands owned by sugar cane mills and associated producers exceeds 80 MT per hectare. According to FENAZUCAR, the areas surrounding the three main mills in Guayas province, which account for 98 percent of the planted area, are utilizing more productive local varieties such as CC85-92, ECU-03 and ECU-04 as well as new varieties from the Sugar Canes Research Center (CINCAE): EC-07, EC-08 and EC-09.

Ecuador’s sugar production in MY 2024/25 is estimated at 530,000 MT, an increase of 110,000 MT, or 21 percent from MY 2023/24. In MY 2025/26 sugar production is forecast to stabilize at 513,000 MT, with sucrose content expected to remain comparable to the previous year.

FAS Quito estimates that up to 20,000 hectares may be allocated for sugar cane dedicated to juice production, which is used to make “panela” (unrefined cane sugar), molasses, alcohol and traditional sweets. Small farmers in the sugar production areas of the Ecuadorian highlands typically produce these items using rudimentary methods.

**Figure 1: Mechanized Sugar Cane Harvest at Ingenio Valdez**



Source: FENAZUCAR

The ethanol production sector continues to rely on a contract with PETROAMAZONAS, the state-owned oil company, to supply up to 100 million liters of ethanol annually. Mills associated with FENAZUCAR allocate a consistent 15 percent of their production to ethanol. Artisan mills contribute approximately 4 percent or roughly four million liters, which falls short of the 10 percent of Ethanol required in the blend for ECOPAIS gasoline. FAS Quito continues to monitor developments in ethanol production and usage.

Sugar cane production for artisanal ethanol, panela, and other products is spread across the 24 provinces of Ecuador, in regions that receive between 600 and 1,200 millimeters of rainfall annually, with the majority occurring from January to April. This sugar cane cultivation is integrated into subsistence farming practices that also encompass crops such as plantain, cassava, corn, and others.

Ecuador's domestic wholesale sugar prices saw a steady decline from 2011 to 2017. However, prices stabilized during Calendar Year (CY) 2024 following a post-pandemic recovery. This recovery was influenced by disruptions in the harvest during CY 2023, which was attributed to the El Niño atmospheric phenomenon, leading to price speculation. In CY 2024, the average mill gate price for sugar was \$ 0.88/kg. The disparity between wholesale and retail prices is attributable to intermediary markups, speculation, storage, distribution, and advertising costs, which could range from \$1.07 to \$1.20/kg. Throughout CY 2024, retail stores and supermarkets received an adequate supply from mills to meet consumer demand.

**Figures 2-3: Local Alcohol and panela production:**



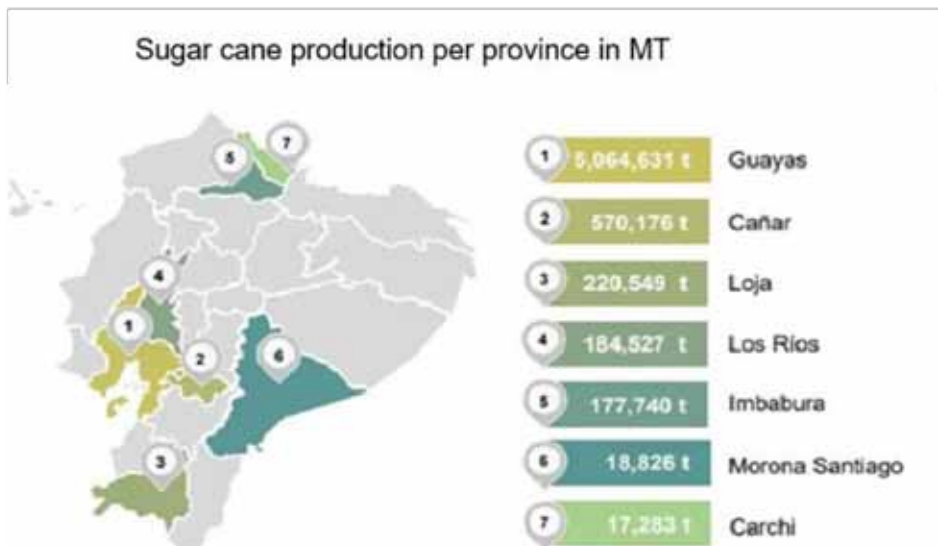
Source: FAS Quito files

In June 2022, the Ministry of Agriculture issued Agreement No. 0447, which established the price of cut sugar cane for MY 2022/23 at \$35.05 per metric ton. This price has remained in effect for CY 2024 as well.

According to Ecuador’s Biofuels Association (APALE), approximately 15 percent of the country’s sugar cane planted area is dedicated to ethanol production. Currently, about 100 million liters of ethanol are produced annually for “ECOPAIS” fuel, with a blend rate of up to 10 percent ethanol in certain regions.

During the harvest season, which runs from June to December, the sugar industry (sugarcane and sugar production) generates approximately 40,000 direct jobs and an additional 150,000 indirect jobs. The industry encompasses 3,146 producers, with 32 percent cultivating on less than 5 hectares, 52 percent managing between 5 to 20 hectares, and 16 percent operating on over 20 hectares.

**Figure 4: Ecuador’s Main Sugar Cane Producing provinces (in MT):**



## Centrifugal Sugar

Sugar, Centrifugal Market Year Begins Ecuador	2023/2024		2024/2025		2025/2026	
	May 2023		May 2024		May 2025	
	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post
Beginning Stocks (1000 MT)	385	385	392	392	0	372
Beet Sugar Production (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cane Sugar Production (1000 MT)	420	420	530	530	0	513
Total Sugar Production (1000 MT)	420	420	530	530	0	513
Raw Imports (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refined Imp.(Raw Val) (1000 MT)	170	170	40	40	0	13
Total Imports (1000 MT)	170	170	40	40	0	13
Total Supply (1000 MT)	975	975	962	962	0	898
Raw Exports (1000 MT)	18	18	15	26	0	26
Refined Exp.(Raw Val) (1000 MT)	10	10	15	6	0	6
Total Exports (1000 MT)	28	28	30	32	0	32
Human Dom. Consumption (1000 MT)	555	555	555	558	0	567
Other Disappearance (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Use (1000 MT)	555	555	555	558	0	567
Ending Stocks (1000 MT)	392	392	377	372	0	299
Total Distribution (1000 MT)	975	975	962	962	0	898
(1000 MT)						
OFFICIAL DATA CAN BE ACCESSED AT: <a href="#">PSD Online Advanced Query</a>						

### Consumption:

Total domestic sugar consumption in MY 2024/25 is estimated at 558,000 MT, which is lower than the forecast for MY 2025/26, estimated at 567,000 MT. This projection is based on the Ecuadorian Institute for Statistics and Census (INEC) population forecast of 18.3 million for CY 2025. The per capita annual consumption of sugar remains at 32 kilograms (kg) per person.

Sugar mills do not actively promote the consumption; however, producers of panela and brown sugar regularly engage in promotional activities to highlight the benefits of these artisanal products.

Domestic nutritional food labeling and fiscal policies (i.e., sugar taxes) continue to impact sugar consumption in Ecuador. In response to these policies and to explore alternative uses, sugar mills have increasingly used sugar cane and its by-products for alcohol and energy production in recent years.

During CY 2024, sugar production intended for direct sales accounted for 75 percent of total utilization. Of this, 45 percent (or 34 percent of total human consumption) was sold in 50 kg by wholesalers, distributed nationwide and commonly measured by weight at the destination. Supermarket chains, traditional wet markets, and small retailers, such as neighborhood family-owned stores, facilitated 55 percent of direct distribution to consumers, representing approximately 41 percent of total consumption. Sugar is available in various packaging options, including 0.5 kg, 1 kg, 2 kg, and by desired weight.

The remaining 25 percent of sugar consumption is allocated for industrial uses. Sugar is used in the production of sweetened beverages, bread, cookies, frozen snacks, confectionery, and jarred goods.

However, in recent years, the proportion of industrial sugar use has declined from over 40 percent to less than 30 percent of total consumption. This decrease is largely due to the industry's transition to artificial sweeteners in response to domestic nutrition policies.

It's important to note that approximately 13,000 tons of sugar are imported annually by industry, airlines and other sectors, primarily consisting of “refined sugar” that is not produced in Ecuador.

**Figure 5: Refined and Other Sugar Presentations**



Source: Valdez Mill

**Trade:**

Post estimates sugar exports in MY 2024/25 at 32,000 MT, reflecting a 13 percent increase from MY 2023/24. Exports in MY 2025/26 are also forecast to remain at 32,000 MT, as weather conditions in the coastal region are expected to improve following the El Niño weather cycle during CY 2023. This forecast follows a trend of significant fluctuations in Ecuador’s sugar exports in recent years, which peaked in MY 2016/17 at 107,000 MT, before declining to 60,000 MT the following year.

Ecuador consistently meets its U.S. tariff rate quota (TRQ) for sugar. FAS Quito does not anticipate any changes in Ecuador’s capacity to fulfill the TRQ in the coming years, as the U.S. TRQ represents a small percentage of Ecuador’s total sugar production (roughly three percent). Additionally, Ecuador has successfully fulfilled reallocated amounts without any issues.

Ecuador is largely self-sufficient in raw sugar production, with imports historically ranging from 25,000 MT to 40,000 MT per year, as reported by Ecuador’s National Federation of Sugar Producers (FENAZUCAR). For MY 2024/25, imports are estimated to reach 40,000 MT, consistent with this historical trend. However, sugar imports for MY 2025/26 are forecasted to decrease significantly to 13,000 MT, representing a drop of 27,000 MT from MY 2024/25.

Ecuador’s surplus sugar production is partially directed towards exports, with the United States being the primary destination. During CY 2024 the United States accounted for 89 percent of Ecuador’s sugar exports. Spain and Germany followed, each representing 3 percent of exports, while additional

destinations, primarily in Europe and Latin America, made up the remaining 5 percent of total exports. All sugar exported to the U.S. is shipped under the U.S. Quota Eligibility System.

**Figure 6: Ecuador Sugar Exports (MT/ FOB price) 2024**

WHEIGHT MT	USD FOB	USD CIF
26,731.7	20,570.5	0.0
toneladas	miles	miles

Exports per country in MT and FOB price			
	Peso (t)	FOB (USD miles)	CIF (USD miles)
Estados Unidos / US	23,924.3	17,194.4	
Alemania / Germany	755.0	1,004.0	
España / Spain	803.8	932.3	
Italia / Italy	267.1	420.6	
Colombia / Colombia	458.0	323.5	
Francia	165.4	263.5	
Países Bajos	126.6	183.0	
Bélgica	91.8	50.4	
República Checa	28.5	44.8	
Finlandia	26.3	39.9	
Chile	26.0	32.6	
Reino Unido	14.0	30.4	
Perú	28.0	27.6	
Canadá	10.0	14.0	
Rusia	5.0	6.0	
Lituania	2.0	3.6	
Cuba	0.0	0.1	

Source: SIPA MAG

Local and international sugar prices significantly influence the decision to export sugar to Colombia and other countries. It is important to note that the export figures reported by the Ecuadorian Central Bank do not include informal cross-border trade with neighboring countries like Colombia and Peru, which is considered to be negligible.

**Stocks:**

The Government of Ecuador does not maintain a strategic sugar reserve; however, private sector sugar mills have invested in sugar storage facilities. These warehouses are primarily located in Guayaquil and the Guayas province. The existing storage capacity is adequate to accommodate both production and a four-month reserve during the inter-harvest period. For MY 2025/2026, ending stocks are forecasted to be approximately 299,000 MT.

**Policy:**

Domestic sugar prices remain artificially high due to the government's protection of the sugar value-added chain from international trade. A significant example of government intervention favoring

Ecuador's sugar producers is COMEX Resolution 030-2017, enacted in December 2017. This resolution effectively terminated the preferential treatment (zero tariffs) previously granted to sugar imports from Andean Community members Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. It established a tariff-free quota for imports from Colombia of up to 30,000 MT. Subsequently, all sugar imports from other Andean Community countries became subject to the Andean Price Band System. In November 2018, Resolution 030 was replaced with COMEX Resolution 020-2018. Resolution 020, which further restricted access to the Ecuadorian market by reducing the quota for Colombian exports to 17,229 MT. Before the implementation of these COMEX Resolutions, Ecuador's sugar imports from the Andean Community enjoyed duty-free treatment, although prior government authorization was still required for these imports.

All-origin raw and refined sugar imports are assessed a 15 percent base tariff. Additionally, sugar imports are assessed a variable tariff under the Andean Price Band System. For the first half of April 2021, this variable levy for both raw and refined sugar was set at 15 percent. Furthermore, Ecuador has a World Trade Organization (WTO)-approved bound tariff rate of 45 percent for sugar imports, which encompasses duties related to the price band.

Three policy changes have significantly influenced domestic sugar consumption in Ecuador over the last few years. A 2014 food labeling law mandated that all processed food products and beverages sold in Ecuador be labeled with a traffic light-style system. This labeling highlights the content of sugar, salt, and fat, providing consumers with clear information about the nutritional quality of the products they purchase. This initiative is aimed at promoting healthier dietary choices among the population.

Following the 2014 food labeling law, additional policy changes have further impacted domestic sugar consumption in Ecuador. Issued by Ecuador's Ministry of Industries, Resolution 17-156, mandates that food products packaged for retail sale must include a warning label for sugar content. The label states: "For your health, reduce the consumption of this product." This initiative aims to inform consumers about the health risks associated with excessive sugar intake. The Organic Law to Balance Public Finances (April 29, 2016, published in the Official Record 744) established a tax scheme specifically for sugary drinks. It categorizes non-alcoholic beverages based on their sugar content:

- Soft drinks with a sugar content  $\leq 25$  grams per liter and energy drinks are subjected to a 10 percent ad-valorem tax.
- Non-alcoholic drinks and soft drinks with a sugar content  $> 25$  grams per liter (excluding energy drinks) incur a charge of \$0.18 for each 100 grams of sugar.

These measures are designed to discourage excessive sugar consumption by increasing product visibility and costs associated with high sugar content, thereby promoting healthier dietary choices among the population.

**Figure 5: Image of Ecuador's Dietary Warning Labels:**



Source: Ecuador Ministry of Public Health

Industry sources indicate that the implementation of these three policies has notably influenced consumer patterns and increased production costs for food and beverage manufacturers in Ecuador. As a result, many manufacturers are increasingly replacing sugar with low-calorie sugar substitutes in their products. This shift helps them comply with health regulations, manage production costs, and respond to changing consumer preferences for healthier options.

The use of low-calorie substitutes not only helps manufacturers avoid the higher taxes associated with sugary products but also aligns with public health initiatives aimed at reducing sugar consumption. Consequently, this trend reflects a broader market adjustment in response to regulatory pressures and evolving consumer demands for healthier food and beverage choices. Sugar is a crucial component of the basic family basket of goods utilized by the Ecuadorian government to monitor inflation. Neither farmers nor mills receive domestic or export subsidies. However, sugar cane farmers, like other farmers, are eligible for agricultural loans at preferential rates from institutions such as BanEcuador and the National Finance Corporation.

Ecuador enjoys associate status with the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), although it has yet initiated negotiations regarding sugar tariffs within this framework. This status allows Ecuador to engage in certain collaborative efforts with MERCOSUR member countries, but no concrete agreements concerning sugar have been established. Additionally, under the Ecuador-European Union Free Trade Agreement which came into effect on January 1, 2017, Ecuador benefits from a tariff-rate quota (TRQ) for sugar and related products, allowing for the export of up to 25,000 metric tons of sugar to the EU. This provision enhances Ecuador's export opportunities and facilitates access to the European market while promoting the country's sugar industry. The TRQ is composed of 15,000 MT of raw sugar and an additional 10,000 MT for a mix of products such as high-content sugar and cocoa powder. However, in 2021, Ecuadorian sugar producers did not utilize this quota benefit. The decision not to claim the TRQ was primarily due to considerations related to domestic supply levels and the significant freight costs associated with exporting sugar. These factors likely made it less economically viable for producers to engage in exports under the TRQ, leading them to prioritize domestic market needs over international trade opportunities.



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# THE HISTORY AND SCIENCE OF THE BARREL

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## The History and Science of the Barrel

### Lesson 4: Chemical Properties of Oak

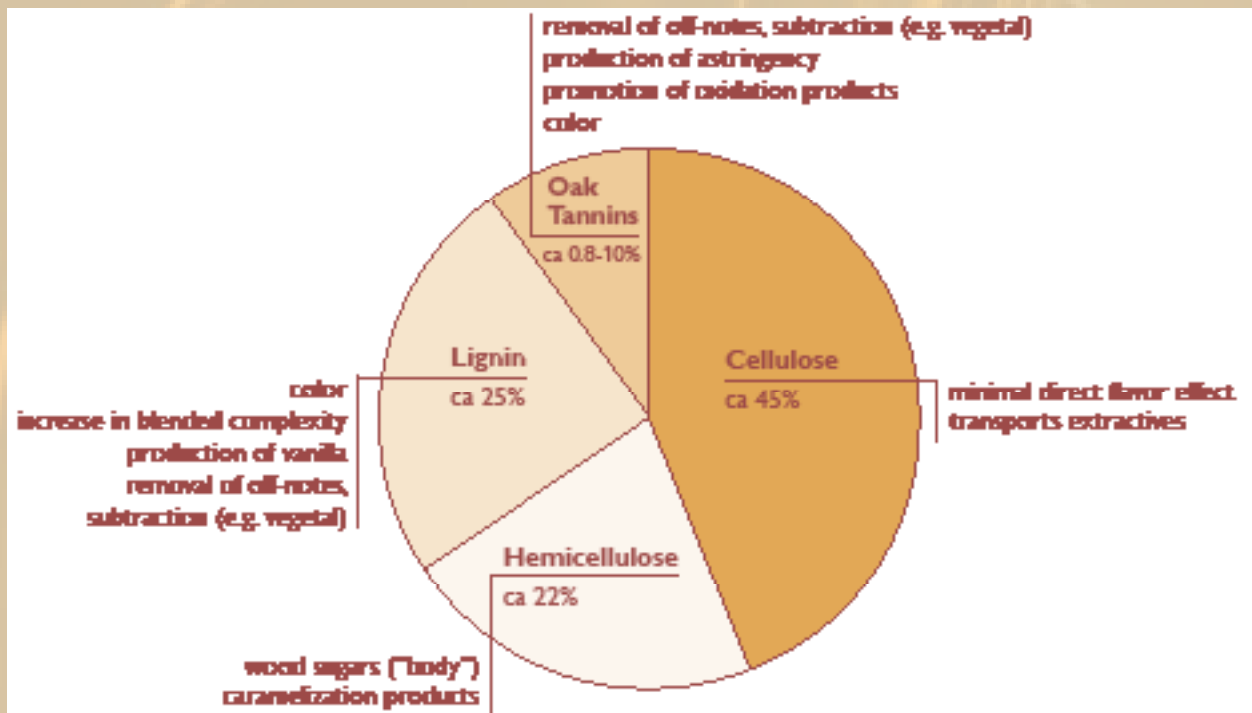
**W**elcome to Lesson 4 of 12 of the Rum University's latest course! You can find previous lessons of this course by visiting the Archives page at **GotRum.com**. You can also find additional courses and material at the university's official website, **www.RumUniversity.com**.

#### Oak barrels and the source of their flavors

In addition to the physical properties of oak, which we described in Lesson 3, the major building blocks of oak wood also contribute greatly to the flavor of the rum aged in its barrels. The following table illustrates these components along with the flavors and aromas each influences:

	Only a limited contribution to toastiness but important for the transport of wood extractives from barrel to rum	Cellulose
Hemicellulose	Wood sugars ("body")	Lignin
	Caramelization products	
	Color	
	Increase in blended complexity	Lignin
	Production of vanilla	
Oak Tannins	Promotion of oxidation products	Char Layer
	Production of astringency	
	Removal of off-notes	
	Burnt wood flavors	Char Layer

The presence of these components (cellulose, hemicellulose, lignin, tannins and char) by themselves does not guarantee the rum will acquire the taste or aroma desired. One needs to look at the intensity/concentration of each one in connection with the wood curing process employed (Lesson 6) and the toasting or charring method selected for each barrel (Lesson 8).



The graph above shows us the average makeup of oak in terms of these components.

**Cellulose** - is the most abundant natural polymer on earth. It consists of linear chains of glucose units and remains relatively intact even after wood curing and toasting.

**Hemicellulose** - also known as a “wood sugar” is a two-dimensional polymer comprised of many simple sugars, including: Glucose, Xylose, Mannose, Arabinose, Galactose and Rhamnose.

**Lignin** - despite the fact that it is also one of the most abundant nature-produced materials on earth, lignin remains one of the least understood. Oak lignin consists of two building blocks: guaiacyl and syringyl. The former is responsible for producing coniferaldehyde, vanillin and vanillic acid, which -especially the vanillin- are easily recognized in cask-condition spirits.

**Oak tannins** - these plant polyphenols derive their name from the Latin word *tannum*, which means “crushed oak bark,” since in early times oak trees served as a major source of tannin for the leather tannin industry. Tannins improve aged rum’s character by increasing the perception of balance, complexity and roundness.

*Our special thanks to Independent Stave Company for their support in our research of oak.*

# CIGAR & RUM PAIRING

by Philip Ili Barake





**M**y name is Philip Ili Barake, Sommelier by trade. As a result of working with selected restaurants and wine producers in Chile, I started developing a passion for distilled spirits and cigars. As part of my most recent job, I had the opportunity to visit many Central American countries, as well as, rum distilleries and tobacco growers.

But my passion for spirits and cigars did not end there; in 2010 I had the honor of representing Chile at the International Cigar Sommelier Competition, where I won first place, becoming the first South American to ever achieve that feat.

Now I face the challenge of impressing the readers of "Got Rum?" with what is perhaps the toughest task for a Sommelier: discussing pairings while being well aware that there are as many individual preferences as there are rums and cigars in the world.

I believe a pairing is an experience that should not be limited to only two products; it is something that can be incorporated into our lives. I hope to help our readers discover and appreciate the pleasure of trying new things (or experiencing known things in new ways).

Philip  
#GRCigarPairing



## Short For A Latte

One of the downsides of being where I am, at the end of the world, is the difficulty in finding days with calm winds, to enjoy a proper cigar. This being the case, I had to convince myself to set aside the long cigars and replace them with short ones that could be paired with a simple, calory-rich cocktail fit for this climate.

One of my most used cocktails is the Espresso Martini with Rum, but for this pairing I wanted to add another touch to bring it more in line with the coffee houses in the area, resulting in a Latte Martini with Rum.

For this cocktail I selected Ron Panamá 15 Años, Reserva Especial. It was a new bottle, so I had to try it neat first. The aroma is clean, with typical notes of caramel and old oak. Once on the palate, it reveals leather and wood, but then the alcohol notes take over with a marked sweetness. I would have liked to taste the 15 years of age a bit more, but I'm not going to judge it in this pairing.

The recipe is as follows, adhering to the original cocktail's proportions. I used a 3 oz. Martini glass.

- 1 oz. Ron Panamá 15 Años
- 1 oz. Coffee Liqueur
- 1 oz. Espresso
- 1 dash of Sweetened Condensed Milk

Add all the ingredients to a cocktail shaker with a couple of large ice cubes and shake and then strain and serve in the glass. Make sure your Martini glass is already chilled,



Photos credit: @Cigarili



Photo credit: @Cigarili

otherwise the cocktail will warm up too quickly, since we are straining the ice.

Originally, I wanted to choose a different cigar, but the rain kept sabotaging me. Consequently, I selected a Purito from the Dominican Republic, with very dark Kentucky leaves, with rich leather and coffee notes, which are ideal for the cocktail. The tobacco even has a residual sweetness on the lips, that combines beautifully with the Latte, making it a great pairing right from the start.

I must admit that the smoothness from the sweetened condensed milk in the cocktail is excellent. The sweetness needs to be something that reminds you of brown sugar, almost a liquid dessert. It was just a dribble, anything more than that would make the cocktail too sweet and would throw off the pairing.

It is also OK for the cocktail to be a bit sweet, but there is a fine line between

sweet enough and oversweet.

These short pairings, almost become “shot” pairings, due to the briefness of the time and the reduced serving volume, but they are satisfying. Coffee and cigar lovers also find their sweetness hard to resist, it is a heavenly marriage.

If you are recreating this pairing in a warmer climate, you could easily double up the recipe and prepare the cocktail in a blender with ice, as a Frappé, it will undoubtedly be good in the summer.

I hope that readers everywhere can recreate the pairing, adjusting it to their climate, so that they can enjoy it fully during the day.

Philip Ili Barake  
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