

Got Rum?®

DECEMBER 2023

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**COOKING WITH RUM - ANGEL'S SHARE - CIGAR & RUM
MUSE OF MIXOLOGY - RUM HISTORIAN
UNTIL THE BITTER END - RUM IN THE NEWS
THE IMBIBER'S ALMANAC - THE RUM UNIVERSITY®
"GOT RUM?" TEAM INTERVIEW**



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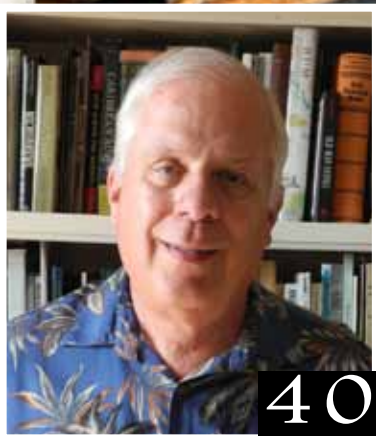
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Editor and Publisher:	luis@gotrum.com
Executive Editor:	margaret@gotrum.com
Cigar and Rum:	philip@gotrum.com
Angel's Share:	paul@gotrum.com
Rum Historian:	marco@gotrum.com
Rum in the News:	mike@gotrum.com
Cooking with Rum:	sue@gotrum.com
Webmaster:	web@gotrum.com
Director of Photography:	art@gotrum.com

If you would like to submit news or press releases, please forward them to:

news@gotrum.com

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FRONT COVER: A Drink Dressed to Impress
INSIDE SPREAD: Winter Harvest

FROM THE EDITOR

The Year

It is that time of the year again, when we look back at what we've accomplished and dream about what the future will hold for us. I find that poetry has a poignant, yet elegant way to communicate complex notions with simple words, and the following poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox illustrates this perfectly in her poem "The Year" (from *A Poem for Every Winter Day*):

*What can be said in New Year rhymes,
That's not been said a thousand times?
The new years come, the old years go,
We know we dream, we dream we know.
We rise up laughing with the light,
We lie down weeping with the night.
We hug the world until it stings,
We curse it then and sigh for wings.
We live, we love, we woo, we wed,
We wreath our prides, we sheet our dead.
We laugh, we weep, we hope, we fear,
And that's the burden of a year.*

Goal-driven people tend to be too harsh with themselves when evaluating the prospect of a year with missed deadlines and incomplete tasks.

While some self-criticism is always good to re-focus our attention on what is truly important, it is also praiseworthy to acknowledge the fact that another year is about to start, with a



new opportunity to start fresh, full of energy and renewed commitment.

From the Rum Runner Press group of companies (The Rum University, Rum Central and "Got Rum?"), we wish you, your families and teams, the best of the season. May you enjoy excellent health, safety on your travels, loving company when you need it and soul-warming food and drinks to satisfy your bodies and your minds, without exceeding your limitations.

Happy Holidays!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Luis".

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 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!

Ron Barcelo Gran Añejo Dark Series

The Barcelo rum distillery is based in the Dominican Republic and is the only carbon-neutral distillery on the island. They produce their rum line by fermenting fresh, pressed sugar cane juice and distilling it in column stills. For their "Dark" series, they age their rums for six years in heavily charred used bourbon barrels and blend them to 40% ABV to create the desired flavor profile. The 750 ml bottle is filled and packaged for international distribution at the distillery.

Appearance

The bottle's shape is custom-designed and used for other Bacelo rums, with the exception that this one is opaque black glass. The front label provides a minimum amount of information about the rum, and the back covers the legal and retail obligations with the added carbon neutral seal. The bottle is sealed with a plastic screw cap that has the Barcelo logo on top. Removing it reveals a plastic diffuser at the top of the bottle. Due to the diffuser, it took several tries to get a decent sample to evaluate.

In the glass, the rum holds a dark golden amber color. Swirling the liquid creates a medium-sized band that releases several waves of legs before slowly evaporating, leaving a ring of pebbles and residue around the glass.

Nose

The initial aroma of the rum reminds me of cherry cola. As that note settled, I discovered notes of toffee, mocha, and orange peel, punctuated by fresh toasted tobacco leaf.

Palate

The rum has a gentle, smoky toffee entry that quickly passes, revealing a lightly astringent orange peel note midpalate. As I continued to evaluate the spirit, I discovered notes of roasted walnuts, dried figs, raisins, and toasted tobacco leaf. These flavors lingered on the palate and slowly faded, revealing charred oak flavors that took over, forming a long, mineral rich, sweet finish.

Review

Over the past ten years, I have evaluated quite a few rums that are part of the Ron Barcelo line and find the portfolio provides a full range of flavorful rums, but unfortunately, their regular Gran Añejo did not hold up well when evaluated. I believe this was in part due to the way the company creates their rum products. During their distillation process, the company distills their liquid at such a high ABV that they depend heavily on the wood and the craftiness of their blenders to create the flavor profiles of their rum line. With the original Gran Añejo, the flavor profile was overly tannic but had little to offer beyond that. So, it was a pleasant surprise that I found that the Gran Añejo Dark is a flavorful experience that is superior to the original at every level and was interesting to evaluate. With this balance of flavors, I can see where this rum could easily be a workhorse product, replace their original Gran Añejo in a variety of cocktails, and hold its own as a sipping rum. The bottle and marketing material state this rum is part of a “Dark” series, which makes me hope that there are more products that use these heavily charred barrels in their blends.



www.ronbarcelo.com

THE ANGEL'S SHARE

by Paul Senft

Holmes Cay Single Cask Rum Barbados 2009

During the fall of 2023, Holmes Cay released another expression of their Single Cask Rum line. This rum was made at the Foursquare Rum Distillery, based in Saint Phillip, Barbados, using 100% molasses and is a blend of pot still and column Coffey still rums. This is standard operating procedure when it comes to rums of this vintage. Things get interesting when it comes to the aging of the spirit. The first eight years the rum was aged in used bourbon casks, then spent four additional years aging in Liverpool, UK, in bourbon casks, and then finally aged two years in New York State in a Premier Cru Bordeaux cask. After completing the aging process, the rum was non-chill filtered and bottled at 55% ABV. No sugar, coloring, or other additives were used during this process.

Appearance

The 700 ml short-necked bottle is sealed with a clear security wrap holding a wooden-capped synthetic cork to the bottle. The label provides basic information about the product and the different casks used during aging. The rum holds a solid amber color in the bottle, but in the glass, I detected a red hue in the liquid. Swirling the liquid created a thick band that slowly released a couple of waves of legs. It takes several minutes for the bands to evaporate, leaving a ring of pebbles around the glass.

Nose

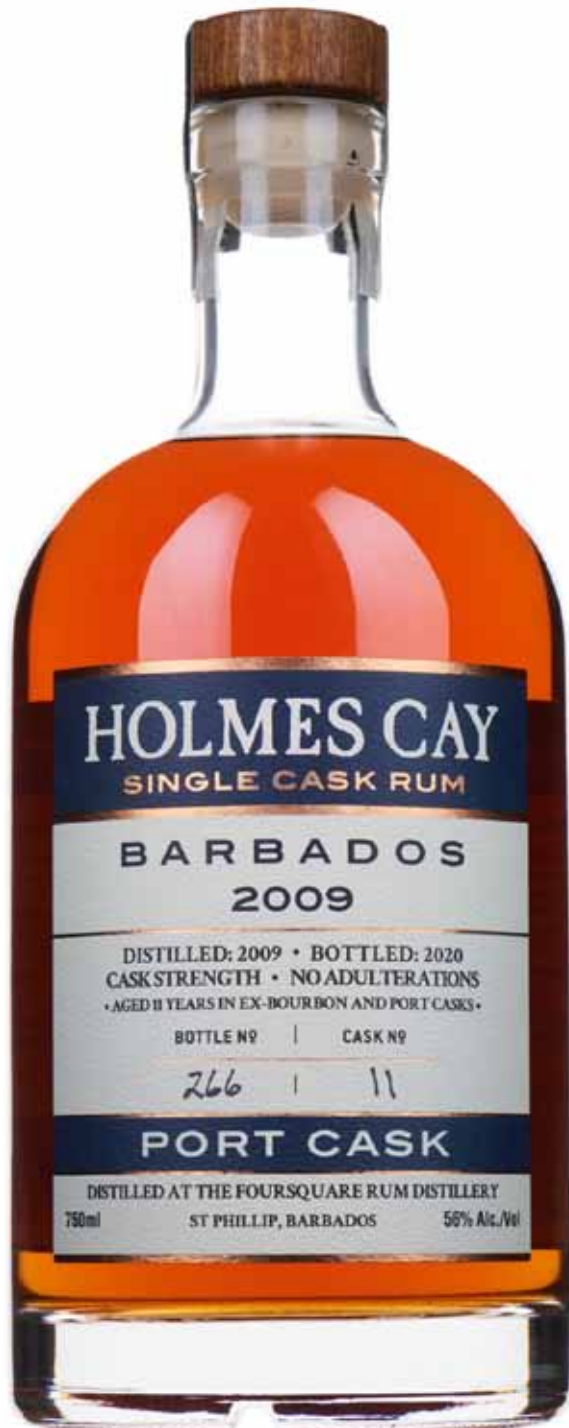
The aroma leads with dark berry notes and is quickly followed by a rich Madagascar vanilla and nips of smoky oak, rounding out the experience.

Palate

The first sip delivers the dark berry notes from the aroma along with the bite of the alcohol across the palate. Spicy notes hit hard midpalate with notes of clove, lightly bitter cinnamon bark, allspice, and black pepper. As the spice notes subside, a distinct plum note with orange peel zest weaves in and merges with the berry flavors. As the rum flavors begin to fade, a graphite/oak char note lingers on the palate, creating a long, dry finish.

Review

Since Eric Kaye founded the Holmes Cay line in 2019, he has been on a mission to find unique blends and flavor profiles and bottle them in limited releases. The Holmes Cay Single Cask Barbados 2009 release demonstrates the nuances of aging in tropical and continental environments and the influence the cask finish has on a product. When I first sipped the rum, I very quickly tossed out any preconceived notions I had about the brand that created the rum and instead turned my attention to the twists and turns of this rather unique flavor experience. While I found the aroma simplistic with its one, two, three, and done experience, the flavor profile was an enjoyable exploration as I sipped and savored the rum, enjoying the fruit and spice notes and the way they flowed during the evaluation process. Like most Holmes Cay releases, this is a limited product, and if you enjoy interesting flavor experiences, this one is worthy of your time and attention.



www.holmes cay.com

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margaret@gotrums.com

COOKING WITH RUM

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

by Chef Susan Whitley



Crock Pot Holiday Rum Meatballs

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. Bag of Frozen Meatballs
- ½ C. Ketchup
- ½ C. Brown Sugar, packed
- ¼ C. Dark Rum
- 1 tsp. Fresh Lemon Juice
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire Sauce
- Finely Chopped Green Onion, for garnish

Directions:

1. To make the rum sauce, combine all ingredients in a medium size bowl, except the meatballs, and mix well.
2. Place frozen meatballs into a crock pot and then pour the rum sauce on top. Mix it up all real good so that each meatball is coated with the rum sauce.
3. Turn up the heat to high and leave on high for about an hour, stirring a couple times.
4. Once the meatballs have somewhat thawed, go ahead and turn your crockpot down to low. Cook an additional 10 minutes. Ready to serve. Garnish with finely chopped onions. Use toothpicks to pick up each meatball. Serves 10.



Eggnog Cheesecake

Ingredients:

- 1 C. Graham Cracker Crumbs
- 2 Tbsp. Sugar
- 3 Tbsp. Butter, melted
- 3- 8 oz. Packages of Cream Cheese, softened
- 1 C. Brown Sugar
- 3 Tbsp. All-Purpose Flour
- 2 Large Eggs (room temperature, lightly beaten)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ C. Eggnog
- 4 Tbsp. Dark Rum
- Add a dash of Ground Nutmeg
- Add Whipped Cream

Directions:

1. Place a greased 9-inch springform pan on a double thickness of heavy-duty foil (about 18 in. square). Securely wrap foil around pan.
2. In a small bowl, combine the cracker crumbs, sugar and butter. Press onto the bottom of pan. Place on a baking sheet. Bake at 325° for 10 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.
3. In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese, sugar and flour until smooth. Add eggs; beat on low speed just until combined. Gradually stir in the eggnog, rum and nutmeg. Pour filling over crust.
4. Place springform pan in a larger baking pan; add 1 in. hot water to larger pan.
5. Bake at 325° until center is just set and top appears dull, 45-50 minutes. Remove springform pan from water bath. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes.
6. Loosen side from pan with a knife; cool 1 hour longer. Refrigerate overnight, covering when completely cooled. If desired, top with whipped cream, then sprinkle with nutmeg.



The IMBIBER'S Almanac

A monthly guide for thirsty
explorers looking for new reasons
to raise their glasses!

The Imbiber's Almanac - The Rum University®

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

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The IMBIBER'S Almanac

DECEMBER

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

Are you looking for festive reasons
to raise your glass this month?

Here are a few of them!

Write to us at info@gotrum.com
if we missed any!

DECEMBER - National Egnog Month

DEC 10 National Lager Day

DEC 14 National Screwdriver Day

DEC 20 National Sangria Day

DEC 24 National Egnog Day

DEC 31 National Champagne Day





The IMBIBER'S Almanac

Featured Cocktail:
Eggnog
(December 24th)

Ingredients:

- 1 Large Egg
- 2 tsp. Superfine Sugar, divided
- 1 oz. Heavy Cream
- 1/2 tsp. Pure Vanilla Extract
- 1/4 tsp. Pure Almond Extract
- 1 1/2 oz. Aged Rum (make sure it is aged, not just “dark”)
- Grated Nutmeg, for garnish
- Grated Cinnamon, for garnish

Directions:

1. Separate the egg into two bowls.
2. With a hand mixer, beat the yolk until creamy.
3. Beat the egg white with 1 teaspoon sugar until soft peaks form.
4. Slowly fold the egg white and yolk together using a spoon.
5. In a separate bowl, beat the cream with the vanilla and almond extracts and the remaining 1 teaspoon of sugar until stiff peaks form. Add the rum and stir gently.
6. Slowly fold the cream into the egg mixture.
7. Serve immediately over ice, if you like, in a punch or martini glass.
8. Garnish with grated nutmeg and cinnamon.
9. Garnish and enjoy!

THE MUSE OF MIXOLOGY

by Cris Dehlavi



Hi, my name is Cris Dehlavi, and I have been writing for *Got Rum?* for almost 8 years. For nearly 20 years, I ran a bar program at the prestigious 4-Diamond Ohio restaurant “M at Miranova.” It was one of the first craft cocktail bars in Columbus and garnered dozens of awards. The restaurant closed in 2020, and it was then that I made a move from being behind the stick to working as Brand Educator for Diageo Hospitality Partnership.

I have been committed to mentorship my entire professional life and have been one of the leaders of the Cocktail Apprentice Program at Tales of the Cocktail since 2015. In 2013 I completed the BAR 5-Day program, and I am happy to announce that I passed my WSET Level 3 in Spirits this past fall.

One of my proudest moments was being inducted into the Dame Hall of Fame in 2016. I hope you enjoy my stories about cocktails and rum!

Polynesian Pearl Diver


The name alone brings visions of endless sunshine, crystal blue waters, and divers finding pink pearls in giant oyster shells. If you are reading this in a cold climate location (this is a December article, after all) this may be something you are dreaming about anyway!

The Polynesian Pearl Diver is one of the many spectacular drinks that originated at the famous Los Angeles Don The Beachcomber tiki bar. It was created in the 1930's and I absolutely love this cocktail because it incorporates all of the typical ingredients you think about with tiki drinks: two types of rum, lime and orange juices, Angostura bitters, and crushed ice...with one unique addition. The super secret ingredient is what sets this recipe apart from all the others, and Don Beach called it his “Gardenia Mix”. Gardenia mix is essentially a butter/honey syrup flavored with vanilla and baking spices- not unlike the items you would use in a traditional Hot Buttered Rum.

Don's incredibly creative and pioneering manner gave us many of the tiki classics we know today and this drink is no exception. Fun Fact: Leonardo DiCaprio's character in the movie *Django Unchained* orders a Polynesian Pearl Diver (“don't spare the rum!”). What makes this interesting as well as impossible, is that the movie is set in the 1850's.







I have included both the recipe for the Gardenia Mix AND the cocktail itself. Have fun with this one, play around with different rums too. Beachbum Berry's Latitude 29 in New Orleans does a similar cocktail called "Pontchartrain Pearl Diver", using Jamaican rum and passionfruit in it.

POLYNESIAN PEARL DIVER

Ingredients:

- 1.5 oz. Aged Puerto Rican Rum
- .5 oz. Demerara Rum
- .5 oz. Lime Juice
- .5 oz. Orange Juice
- .5 oz. Gardenia Mix (see recipe below)
- 2 dashes Angostura Bitters

Directions:

1. Place all ingredients into a blender and blend on high for 20 seconds.
2. Pour over crushed ice, and garnish as you wish.

DON'S GARDENIA MIX

Ingredients:

- 1 oz. Honey
- 1 oz. Unsalted softened butter
- 1 tsp. Cinnamon simple syrup
- ½ tsp. Vanilla simple syrup
- ½ tsp. Allspice Dram

Directions:

1. Using a spatula or a hand mixer, whip until creamy.
2. Refrigerate this for up to one week.

Pro tip: You can also freeze this mix, so feel free to make a larger batch.

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 a warm, golden-brown color, suggesting a library or a study. The text 'THE Rum UNIVERSITY LIBRARY' is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

THE Rum[®] 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

**Holiday Cocktails: Over 100 Simple Cocktails
to Celebrate the Season
by Editors of Cider Mill Press**

(Publisher's Review) Featuring more than 100 elegant cocktails for the most wonderful time of the year, *Holiday Cocktails* makes it easy to greet your family and friends in a manner that suits the season.

Inside, you'll find:

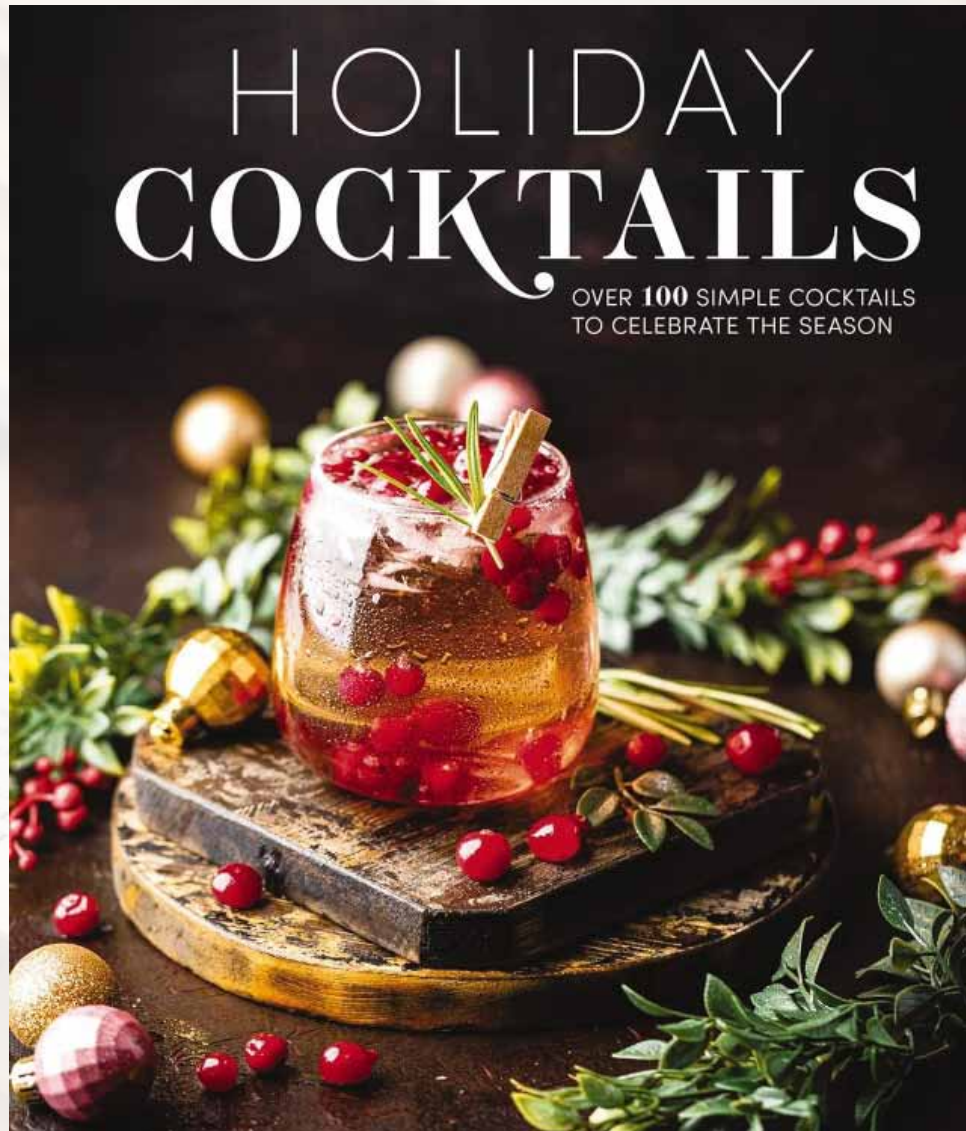
Punches and big batch cocktails that make entertaining a breeze

Toddies and other winter warmers to keep you cozy as the world turns cold

Sparkling cocktails to capture the excitement in the air

Helpful tips and techniques so your creations are always top shelf

Whether you're expecting a big crew of people at the annual holiday gathering or looking for something to enjoy as you quietly sit and appreciate the lit tree, you'll find a drink that's effortless to prepare, allowing you to remain focused on the magic. From decadent classics like Egg Nog to joyful serves like the Christmas Martini, these cocktails prove there's no place like home for the holidays.



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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 and through History I have always tried to understand the world, and men. Life brought me to work in tourism, event organization and vocational training, then, already in my fifties 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. I began to understand something about sugarcane, fermentation, distillation, ageing and so on.

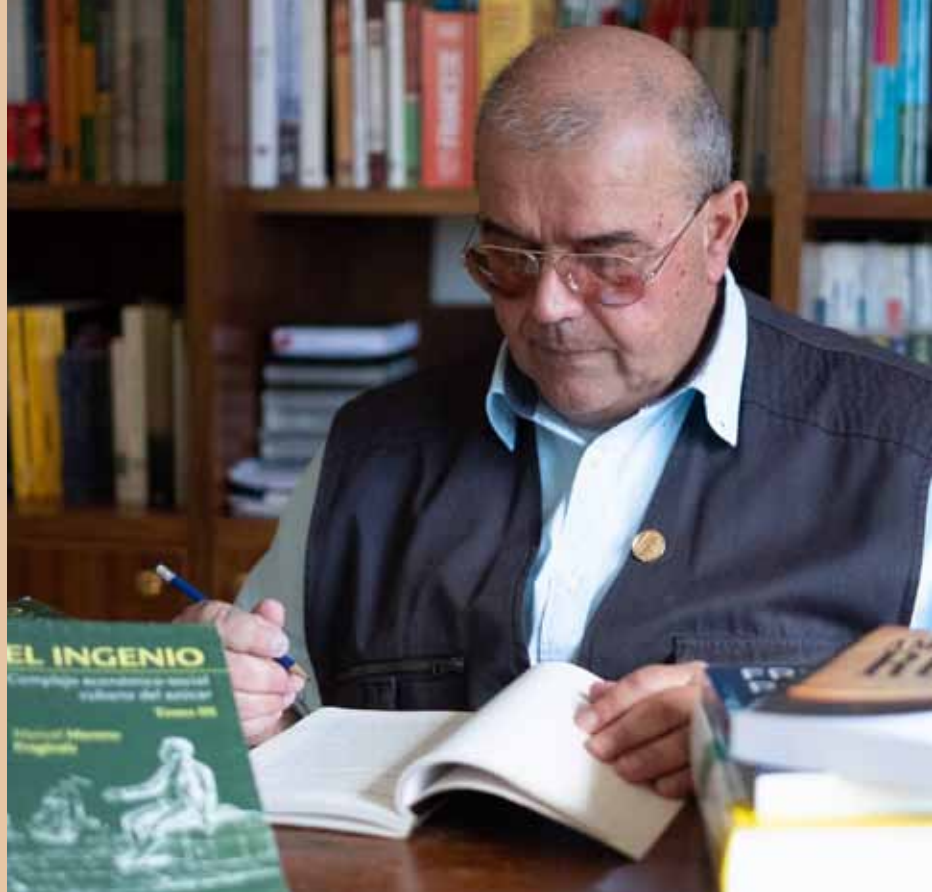
Soon, I discovered that rum has also a terrible and rich History, made of voyages and conquests, blood and sweat, imperial fleets and revolutions. I soon realized that this History deserved to be researched properly and I decided to devote myself to it with all my passion and with the help of the basic 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 2019 I began to run a Blog: www.therumhistorian.com

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

I am currently doing new research on the History of Cuban Rum.



HISTORY OF CUBAN RUM 14 RUM CONSUMPTION IN XIX CENTURY'S CUBA

After a few months' break, we take up again the story of Cuban rum, this time focusing on rum consumption in XIX century's Cuba. For this article, I based myself mostly on the essay "*Bebidas y ambiente social en la Cuba del siglo XIX*" (Drinks and social environment in XIX century's Cuba) 2002 by Ismael Sarmiento Ramírez, the beautiful book of Samuel Hazard "*Cuba with pen and pencil*" 1870, the classic book by Fernando Campoamor "*El hijo alegre de la caña*" (The happy son of the cane) 1981, and, last but not least, the fundamental volume by Frederick H. Smith "*Caribbean Rum*" 2005.

For the sake of simplicity, I will always use the word rum. But remember that in XIX century Cuba, they usually called ordinary, cheap, rum with the word *aguardiente de caña* (sugar cane burning water) or simply *aguardiente*, while they used the word *ron* (rum) only for the better quality, expensive, product.

Let's start with the black population, remembering that in Cuba, alongside the majority of slaves, there was also a substantial minority of free blacks and mulattoes. In the Cuban plantations rum was distributed to slaves as a preventive and healing medicine because it was believed that it could preserve them from many diseases and help cure them if they got sick. Also, in Cuba as elsewhere in the Caribbean, to make regular distributions of rum to the slaves was a normal practice in nearly all the plantations. They were limited distributions, not enough to make them drunk, but enough to be enjoyed greatly. These distributions helped to maintain order and respect for hierarchies. Moreover, when the work was particularly hard or difficult, they were given an extra ration as a reward. Distributions of rum occurred also for some religious festivities, for Catholic chapels and priests were often present in Cuban plantations. The Planters lived in a perpetual contradiction. On the one hand, rum made the slaves happier and more docile, it made them work harder and better accept their bondage. On the other, too much rum made them drunk, therefore unable to work and at times even rebellious and dangerous.

Usually, the slaves drank rum in the morning, pure, without diluting it with water. There were two basic types, the so-called *cordón cerrado* (closed lacing?) which seems to have been more or less between 28 and 30 degrees abv, and the lighter *medio cordón* (half lacing?) The ease with which slaves acquired the habit and pleasure of drinking rum probably had its roots also in their familiarity with alcoholic fermented beverages, such as palm wine, widely consumed in their native Africa.

Rum was (and is) also widely used in the rites of Afro-Cuban religions. In Cuba, more than elsewhere in the Caribbean, slaves remained tied to their ethnic and cultural origins, thanks also to their *cabildos* (more or less, councils), a kind of community organizations on

ethnic bases that were tolerated by the masters and the church. In this context, various new religions were born that united divinities and rites of African ancestral religions with strong influences of Catholicism. *Santería* is perhaps the best-known and most widespread, even outside Cuba. "In Cuba, followers of *santería* also pour rum libations and make offerings to *orisha* or spirits in public and private ceremonies. ... all orishas require 'nourishment', including rum, which they received from followers during regular ceremonies. Like Ogun in Haitian voodoo, Ogou, the aggressive warrior spirit in *santería*, typically prefers to drink rum. Spiritual possession also demands the extensive use of alcohol ..." (Smith)

Blacks, both slaves and free, loved rum and tried to get it in every way, even stealing it or stealing goods to exchange it for. Let's read again one of the classics of Cuban literature of the XIX century, and indeed of all time, "*Cecilia Valdés*" by Cirilo Villaverde, written in a large part in 1839. In the novel, which tells the tragic story of a young, beautiful, mulatto girl, rum is often mentioned as the slaves' drink. "While he was waiting for the Master, or was sleeping, or had in his skull more rum than necessary." And later "Did you go to the innkeeper of the village to swap with rum the *raspadura* (a sort of raw sugar) which you steal from the plantation?"

After the abolition of slavery in 1886, the close relation between rum and the blacks continued, "Ex-slaves in Cuba hired themselves to plantations or joined work gangs called *cuadrillas*. These roving workers received rations of aguardiente just as slaves had under slavery. In 1892, the company store at Santa Lucia sugar factory in Gibara, Cuba, possessed a distillery and nine saloons. Workers were paid with company tokens, which they spent on rum at the company stores and saloons." (Smith). This explains why, according to Sarmiento Ramírez, "For a long time and still today to say rum is to establish an almost direct relationship with blacks and with the underworld."

A distorted view with a racist base in his first assertion does not deny that blacks were the most devoted to the consumption of this drink. Regarding the second, rum was the least expensive of all alcoholic drinks, cheaper than grape brandy, and therefore was within reach of the poorest. Only later, in the second half of the century, did the consumption of Cuban rum spread among the upper classes.

Even for the white population, rather than a pleasure drink rum was considered for centuries a preventive and curative medicine for a multiplicity of ills, "*remedio universal*" (universal panacea) according to the friars who assisted patients in hospitals. Watery, it was a medicine to heal wounds and with towels soaked in rum, they rubbed limbs against pains and tiredness. One of the most ingrained customs in Cuba, that of drinking water mixed with rum, was, according to the beliefs of the time, because the spirit gave good qualities to the water and prevented yellow fever from entering the organism; during the first war of independence, the Ten Years' War (1868-78), this practice became common among both Cuban and Spanish soldiers.

On the confidence in the healthy virtues of rum and spirits in general, it is interesting to read today a contemporary testimony, Doctor Ramón Hernández Poggio's. Medical officer of the Spanish army, Hernández Poggio participated in the Ten Years's War and the following year published in "*La Gaceta de la Sanidad Militar*" a long essay: "*Remembranzas médicas de la guerra separatista de Cuba*" (Medical remembrances of the separatist war in Cuba) "Alcohol taken in moderate quantity causes a certain degree of stimulation in the mucous membrane of the stomach to activate its secretions and acts to function, which when absorbed circulates in the blood, speeding up the movements of the heart and vessels, and increasing both the heat of the periphery and of the interior of the body; as it is known that a part of the alcohol

circulating with the blood is burned, from whose combustion the increase of natural calories of the organism proceeds; in addition, the carbonic acid that accumulates in said liquid, produces a general excitation, giving greater activity to the functions, and for this cause as well as for the incombustible part that circulates in a natural state with the blood, gives a certain degree of energy to the nervous system, which is revealed by the vigor that the man acquires under that stimulating action."

From the early 1800s, the growth of rum production had led to the decline of grape brandy imports from the Canaries and Spain, especially from Catalonia. While the wealthiest were drinking Jamaican rum, only wine remained to compete with Cuban rum in the consumption of most consumers. Various types of wine were imported from Spain and France, for all tastes and for (almost) all budgets, but the most common was Catalan wine. And in the choice between drinking wine or rum there was a difference in taste that also had deep cultural and identity roots. The *criollo*, that is the native Cuban, drank rum, while the *peninsular*, that is the Spanish born, did not renounce his wine.

Among the many ways of drinking rum there was a kind of hot cocktail that was consumed on the plantations, partly as cordial, in part for pure pleasure. Here's how Hazard describes it: "As a preliminary to retiring, it was our custom, being invalids (for all of whom it is prescribed), to drink a hot *guarapo* punch, which is said to be for diseases of the chest and lungs, and which I found very palatable indeed. This punch is made by taking an egg, and beating it up with a 'sufficient quantity' of rum, whiskey, or brandy; the boiling cane-juice, fresh from the boilers, and known as *guarapo*, is then poured into it, and this mixture, after being poured backwards and forwards until there is a fine frothy bead on it, is drunk; and I can assure my reader, from frequent experience of it, it is *muy bueno*, indeed."

To us, today, this may seem strange, but in Cuba rum was commonly used also for washing. There is no foreign traveler who did not note with some amazement the ordinary way of using it for personal grooming, supplying water and soap. Cuban women, writes my beloved Hazard, apparently washed very little: "Of course, in matters of this kind, touching the habits of the fair sex, my authority must be second-hand; but I have been frequently informed by lady foreigners, long time resident in Cuba, that the only performance of this kind gone through by the Cuban women, in the country and small places, is the dampening of the corner of the towel with *aguardiente*, a species of rum, and rubbing with it the face and neck."

According to José García de Arboleya in his "Manual de la Isla de Cuba" published in Havana in 1852, the annual consumption per capita was of 12 bottles or 8,7 liters. In the second half of the century, rum consumption grew a lot (along with that of beer), but I have not found precise figures, while the consumption of wine declined, almost disappearing in today's Cuba. These are the same decades in which the new Ron Ligero (Light Rum) was born and spread (see THE QUEST FOR QUALITY in the April 2023 issue) and many famous brands appeared: *Albuerne, Álvarez Camps, Bocoy, Campeón, Castillo, Jiquí, Lavín, Matusalén, Obispo, San Carlos, San Lino, La Vizcaya* y, sobre todo, *Bacardí*.

Finally, many foreign travelers claim that Cubans drink moderately and that it was difficult, someone writes impossible, to see someone really drunk. For example, writes Hazard: "One thing I must confess is, that during my entire stay on the island, I never saw in town or country, a person whom we should call drunk."

And that's a little hard to believe. Maybe it was just a matter of perception and comparison with their Country. Many of the travelers who left us these

testimonies, in fact, came from the USA where Temperance Movements grew from year to year and where drunkenness was considered a real social scourge; the very concept of alcoholism indeed was born in these years. Well, certainly compared to that reality, the situation in Cuba was much better. But I can't believe that there weren't drunk-ards at all. In the second half of the century, with the spread of rum (and beer) consumption, many new words were born to describe drunkenness and drunks. Too many words, if the thing they described did not exist.

Among many imaginative and funny nicknames attributed to drunks, I want to mention here at least one of the best known: *mascavidrios*, that is, more or less, glass eater. And here is the explanation of the origin of the word: "there are those who say that a certain furious drunken, after engulfing regular doses of the burning liquor, not being satisfied yet, continued biting the glass, to the point that one who observed him, shouted to him from the door of the tavern: *Mascavidrio!*" (Francis-co de Paula Gelabert)

In conclusion, during the XIX century, rum consumption grew and spread in Cuba, penetrating all ethnic groups and all social classes. Yet, despite this growth, until the end of the century rum is still not THE Cuban national drink, an icon of Cubanism. For this, we must wait for the new century with Independence and the growing international success of Cuban rum. As we will see in the next articles.

Marco Pierini



Until The BITTER END

Join us as we explore
the fascinating world of
bitter flavors and their role
in gastronomy, mixology and
health.

Presented by

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Until The BITTER END

Science has classified flavors into five main groups, as perceived by our tongues. These groups are: Sweet, Sour, Salty, Bitter and -most recently- Umami.

Most foods and beverages have a combination of flavoring compounds that give them their particular “footprint,” that can encompass several of these flavor groups. This new series is devoted to the Bitter flavor, and to its impact on our everyday life.

Evolutionary scientists suggest that the ability to detect bitterness evolved as a way to protect

us from toxic plants and other substances, which often taste bitter. Although it gets a bad rap, bitterness can be used to create well-rounded and desirable flavor palates. You may not be aware of it, but bitterness is present in many of our favorite foods including chocolate, coffee, wine and barrel-aged spirits.

What does the word “Bitter” mean?

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word bitter (when used as an adjective) as: *being, inducing, or marked by the one of the five basic taste sensations that is peculiarly acrid, astringent, and often disagreeable and characteristic of citrus peels, unsweetened cocoa, black coffee, mature leafy greens (such as kale or mustard), or ale.* The origin of the word goes back to Middle English, from Old English *biter*, going back to Germanic **bitra-* (whence Old Saxon & Old High German *bittar* “acrid-tasting,” Old Norse *bitr* “biting, sharp”) and **baitra-* (whence Gothic *baitrs* “sharp-tasting”), derivatives from the base of **bitan-* “to bite.”

How Does “Bitter” Actually Taste?

Bitterness is neither salty nor sour, but may at times accompany these flavor sensations.

Many people are innately opposed to bitter flavors, but a liking for it can be acquired. Compounds that have an alkaline pH, such as baking soda, often have a bitter flavor.

Scientific research has found that some humans are more sensitive to bitter flavors than others.¹ These individuals are referred to as “supertasters” and are often of Asian, African, or South American descent. Being a supertaster may explain why some individuals find the flavor of vegetables highly disagreeable. Most vegetables contain at least some bitterness, especially when raw.

Bitter Foods

Dark, leafy greens are well known for their bitter flavor. Green leafy vegetables often increase in bitterness as they mature. For this reason, many people prefer tender young greens to their more mature -and bitter- counterparts. Bitter green vegetables include kale, dandelion greens and broccoli.

Cocoa is another food that is enjoyed for its bitter flavor. Pure cocoa has a distinct bitterness, which can be used to balance flavors like sweet or spicy in other foods.

Adding sugar and cream to cocoa significantly reduces its bitterness, making it more palatable.

Likewise, black coffee can be quite bitter. Although sugar and cream can be added to reduce the bitterness, many grow to enjoy the sharp flavor of black coffee. The type of bean and the unique roasting method will also impact coffee’s level of bitterness.

Citrus peels are well known for its bitterness, most of which resides in the white pith. As with most bitter flavors, it can be undesirable on its own, but when combined with other flavor elements, it can provide dimension and balance. Other fruits and vegetables that may provide bitter flavors may include grapefruit, bitter melon, mustard greens, and olives. Beverages such as tonic water, bitters, and mate tea are all also considered bitter. Before shying away from bitter ingredients in the future, explore how they can be combined with complimentary tastes to build a complex and enjoyable flavor profile.

Join us, as we explore the wonderful world of Bitter and Bitterness!



Until The BITTER END

Featured Ingredient: Clove

Scientific Name: *Syzygium aromaticum*

Clove is a tropical evergreen tree of the family Myrtaceae and its small reddish brown flower buds are used as a spice.

Cloves were important in the earliest spice trade and are believed to be indigenous to the Moluccas, or Spice Islands, of Indonesia. Strong of aroma and hot and pungent in taste, cloves are used to flavour many foods, particularly meats and bakery products; in Europe and the United States the spice is a characteristic flavouring in Christmas holiday fare, such as wassail and mincemeat. It is one of the five dried spices—including fennel, cassia, star anise, and Sichuan pepper—that make up the famed Chinese five-spice powder.

The buds of the clove tree contain 14 to 20 percent essential oil, the principal component of which is the aromatic oil eugenol. Cloves are strongly pungent owing to eugenol, which is extracted by distillation to yield oil of cloves. This oil is used to prepare microscopic slides for viewing and is also a local anesthetic for toothaches. Eugenol is used in germicides, perfumes, and mouthwashes, in the synthesis of vanillin, and as a sweetener or intensifier.

(Sources: Britannica.com and Wikipedia.com)

Did You Know That . . .

- Cloves contain a lot of manganese, a mineral that helps your body manage the enzymes that help repair your



bones and make hormones. Manganese can also act as an antioxidant that protects your body from harmful free radicals.

- They're a great source of beta-carotene, which helps give cloves their rich brown color. Carotenes, a family of pigments, act as important antioxidants and provitamins. Carotene pigments can convert into vitamin A, an important nutrient for keeping your eyes healthy.
- Some studies show that cloves may help protect your stomach from ulcers. Most ulcers are caused by thinning of the layers of mucus that protect your stomach lining. Early research shows that eating cloves in large amounts can thicken this mucus, lowering your risk of getting ulcers and helping to heal ulcers that you already have.
- Throughout history, people have used clove oil to soothe toothaches. Some cosmetics and medicines use eugenol for its antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral abilities.

(Source: <https://www.webmd.com>)



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Until The BITTER END

Featured Bitters Recipe: Easy Negroni Booster

In the previous installments of this series, we explored complex, multi-ingredient bitter recipes, which take a long time to prepare before they can be enjoyed. We are closing this series with a very simple, easy to create bitter booster that you can carry with you at all times. And, while it works perfectly with a Negroni, it is also versatile enough to be used in many other drinks.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 C. Simple Syrup
- 3 oz. Gentian Tincture
- 1 oz. Orange Peel Tincture

Directions:

1. Add ingredients to a large bowl or bottle and thoroughly combine them by stirring or shaking.
2. Transfer the mixture into a dark (amber, red or blue) glass bottle with a dropper cap.
3. Experiment with different dosages on your Negroni, to suit your taste.
4. It can also be added to plain water or to hot herbal teas to add a deeper, bitter and aromatic dimension.





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.

RENEGADE RUM

Renegade Rum has introduced a new range of aged and unaged natural rums that showcase its pioneering methodology to the United States. Since launching last summer, Renegade Rum sought to explore the effect terroir, cane variety and distillation style has on the natural flavors of rum. The flagship range brings the first Cuvée Concepts to Renegade Rum with two aged offerings of All-Island Cuvée: Nova and Single Farm Cuvée: Dunfermline and the one unaged offering with Cuvée: Aura. The All-Island Cuvée: Nova is considered the ultimate aged Renegade Rum bottling of the greatest assemblage of Single Farm Origin rums where Cuvée: Aura is an assemblage of Pre-Cask Single Farm Origin rums. The Single Farm Cuvée: Dunfermline contains an assemblage of the Dunfermline Single Farm Origin's component terroirs into a cuvée rum. Additionally, the MicrOrigin: Hope focuses on flavor derived from not just an island, nor a farm, but an actual field within a singular Renegade Rum building block. Renegade Rum is a radical new distilling project that brings wine inspiration and whisky practices to the rum industry. With unrivaled transparency, the distillery harvests, mills and distills fresh sugar cane only — no molasses — from individual farms, one terroir, one field, at a time,

using the innovative distilling techniques gleaned from founder Mark Reynier's experience in the whisky industry. Three of these new unique rums are aged entirely in Grenada in a mixture of super premium French and American oak. <https://renegaderum.com/>

WORTH PARK ESTATE

At the recent Jamaica Food and Drink Festival, Worthy Park unveiled Worthy Park Overproof. Craig Nicholson, Senior Blender at Worthy Park told the Jamaica Observer "Worthy Park Overproof is partially derived from cane juice, where this lighter rum is skillfully blended with our molasses-based rums to achieve a crisper, more refined taste," he revealed. "With an impressive 63 per cent alcohol content, it retains its strength while offering a delightful honey sweetness, making it a more approachable choice when compared to other white overproof rums on the market, which often boast bold and overpowering flavor profiles." Tamika West, Marketing Manager at Worthy Park Estate added "There is so much more of a focus in the global rum community about identifying not only where rum is produced but where are the raw materials that make the rum from," West continued. "The benefit of being a company that has a distillery, sugar factory, and cane fields is that we can be very genuine and authentic in creating a rum from grass to glass. The recent demand for rums made from cane juice, which is more common in the French islands, was also a reason why we thought it could be interesting to introduce a rum made using Jamaican cane juice for fermentation." With a history spanning 350 years since being established in 1670, the island's oldest distillery, family-run Worthy Park Estate uses the pot-still method to produce a heavy-bodied rum, crafting exquisite spirits to become a favorite both locally and on the international market, winning multiple awards every year for the past decade. <https://worthyparkestate.com/>

MOUNT GAY

Last month, Mount Gay's first Single Estate release gathered a great deal of attention. During this same time, another Mount Gay product quietly snuck onto the market, Eclipse Navy Strength. I could not find a great deal of information on this new rum, but it appears to be the same blend of Pot and Column Still rums, aged in American ex-whiskey barrel but proofed to a higher 57.1% ABV. Some online stores are already offering it and seems like it is very affordable. Mount Gay also offers a higher proof version of their Black Barrel rum, but it is only available at the distillery. Hopefully, Eclipse Navy Strength will be successful and that will encourage Mount Gay to release the stronger Black Barrel to full distribution. <https://www.mountgayrum.com/>

ROLLING STONES CROSSFIRE HURRICANE RUM

The Rolling Stones, eternal symbols of musical prowess, are set to make history once again. The

legendary band is introducing their very own signature rum, Crossfire Hurricane, inspired by the opening lyric of their hit song "Jumpin' Jack Flash." Available today at crossfirehurricane.com, this monumental endeavor comes on the heels of their global album launch in Times Square, where they announced 'Hackney Diamonds,' their first studio album in 18 years, to critical acclaim. The Rolling Stones said of the new venture, "We're very excited to be teaming up with Universal Music Group and Socio Ventures to create our first ever premium spirits brand and look forward to sharing it with the world."

"The Rolling Stones continue to have an incredible impact on popular culture with the ability to reach fans across multiple generations around the world. We are excited and proud to announce this new venture with them that will further expand and build upon their iconic brand," said Boyd Muir, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and President of Operations, Universal Music Group. The Stones' love affair with rum began in the '70s while recording their album "Goats Head Soup" in Kingston, Jamaica. The Caribbean's boisterous energy and music took hold of the group over the decades and Mick Jagger and Keith Richards often locate themselves on the islands when the band is off the road. Rooted in rock & roll, the rum encapsulates the edgy and timeless spirit of the band. The website states: this thoughtful Caribbean blend incorporates rums from Jamaica, Barbados, and the Dominican Republic that are perfectly aged in carefully selected oak barrels. "Owning a business with The Rolling Stones is absolutely electrifying. It is an absolute privilege to create this product alongside some of the greatest artists of our time. The band's vision and enthusiasm for Crossfire Hurricane set us apart and position us to redefine the rum category. And you're all invited to the show," said John Fincher, Socio Ventures Partner and Crossfire Hurricane Co-founder. <https://www.crossfirehurricane.com/>

PLANTATION RUM

Earlier in the year, Plantation announced the fifth edition in its Plantation Extrême Collection. This year the series feature three rums from the West Indies Rum Distillery in Barbados. They are representative of the diversity of WIRD's rums and production methods. WIRD produces spirits in historic pot and column stills. It takes truly expert distillers to make these complex instruments sing. Distiller Henderson "Digger" Skinner has been with the distillery for over 40 years; Master Distiller Don Benn is dedicated to Barbados' rum heritage, as well as reducing WIRD's carbon footprint, and Andrew Hassell, Managing Director and rum historian, safeguards the historical archives carefully. The three releases do not use caramel coloring or a dosage.

- BARBADOS WIRD 14 YEARS OLD 2007 is made from a molasses wash that is fermented for 3 to 4 days and then distilled on a Gregg pot still and a column still. It has been aged in the tropics for 2 years in 200L Bourbon barrels before being moved to Southwest France. There it was aged for 10 years and then transferred to 350L Ferrand

Cognac barrels for an additional 2 years. 58.0% ABV

- BARBADOS WIRD 21 YEARS OLD 2000 also starts with a molasses wash that is fermented for 3-4 days. These low wines are distilled on a Vulcan Chamber Still, a Gregg Pot still and a column still. Initial aging was in the tropics in 200L Bourbon barrels for 5 years. Like most of Plantation's rums, it was then shipped to France where it rested for another 14 years before being transferred to 350 Ferrand casks for 2 years. 47.8% ABV
- BARBADOS WIRD 35 YEARS OLD 1986 starts with the same raw materials and fermentation. It was distilled on the Gregg Pot Still and a direct flame still from the 19th century. Aging starts with 13 years in 200L barrels in the tropics. Then the rum was moved to France and aged another 21 years and then finished in 350L cognac barrels for 1 years. 55.1% ABV
<https://www.plantationrum.com/>

BACARDI

Bacardi celebrated its debut on the World's Best Workplaces™ in 2023 list presented by Great Place To Work® and Fortune magazine, coming in at #18. Global leaders were selected from organizations that participated in Great Place To Work's employee survey process, representing the voices of 14.8 million employees worldwide. The 25 World's Best Workplaces stood out for creating globally exceptional employee experiences, high-trust relationships, and workplaces that are fair and equal for all. "As a family-owned business for seven generations, we have a legacy of being Fearless, respecting each other like Family, and leading with a Founders mentality. We are so proud for others to recognize what we know so well, that Bacardi is a special place and our culture is our superpower" said Scott Northcutt, SVP Global Human Resources. More than 9,000 people make up the Bacardi global workforce and at work they are referred to as Primos, not employees. Primos, which means cousins in Spanish, is a nod to the Latin heritage and family business that is part of the company's DNA. Michael C. Bush, CEO of Great Place To Work added "Being a global employer comes with immense responsibility to people and to the planet. These extraordinary companies are having an incredible impact, supporting their people, and fighting for a fairer, safer, and healthier communities around the globe. When you empower people to work with purpose, they reward you with innovation and performance and help create a better world for all of us." Bacardi Limited, the world's largest privately held international spirits company, produces, markets, and distributes spirits and wines. Great Place To Work is the global authority on workplace culture. Since 1992, it has surveyed more than 100 million employees worldwide and used those deep insights to define what makes a great workplace: trust. Its employee survey platform empowers leaders with the feedback, real-time

reporting, and insights they need to make data-driven people decisions.

<http://www.bacardilimited.com>,
<https://www.greatplacetowork.com/>

LOST SPIRITS

Bryan Davis announced the release of Japonisme, a heavy-pot-still rum (often referred to as English style) fermented and distilled from 100% Kokuto sugar. Kokuto is a prized culinary ingredient that has been made in Okinawa since the 17th century. Unlike refined sugar, Kokuto is made by drying boiled sugarcane juice into brownish-black bricks. Davis believes that Japonisme the only rum produced from Kokuto in the United States and possibly the only rum made from this very special ingredient outside Japan. Post distillation, the rum was matured using toasted and charred American oak utilizing the aging technique Lost Spirits Distillery patented in 2015. Inventor (and Lost Spirits' Co-founder) Bryan Davis was the first person to prove (using GCMS) that it was possible to mature spirits in a laboratory setting using a combination of heat and high-intensity light. The Company currently holds a portfolio of granted patents around the world for its maturation process. Davis stated, "We have been working on this project for over a year and I'm delighted to taste the results. It was a rewarding experience for all of us at Lost Spirits to get back to our roots."
<https://www.lostspirits.net/>

BRUGAL

Brugal is proud to commemorate a remarkable milestone, 135 years of unwavering dedication to the art of rum mastery. Since its inception in 1888 by the legendary founder, Don Andrés Brugal, Brugal has been crafting elegant, aromatic, and smooth Dominican rums that have become synonymous with excellence and innovation. Through five generations, the Brugal family has upheld the tradition of rum mastery. Each Maestro Ronero has played an indispensable role in carrying forward the brand's legacy, ensuring that the quality and innovation that define Brugal remain unparalleled. The brand's innovative techniques, including the signature double aging and the pioneering Aromatic Cask Toasting, have set new standards in the world of premium rum. Today, Brugal is led by fifth generation Maestra Ronera, Jassil Villanueva Quintana, Brugal's first female and the industry's youngest rum master, as well as Miguel Ripoll Castellanos, and Gustavo Ortega Zeller. In honor of Brugal's 135th year, the brand hosted a special anniversary edition of "Wonders Await at La Casa Brugal" last month in Miami. Showcasing their range of releases, Brugal delighted guests throughout the night with a look into the brand's history, followed by delightful Brugal 1888 Espresso Martinis, a make-your-own Brugal 1888 Old Fashioned Bar, and type-written live poetry.
www.brugal-rum.com.

WEST INDIES RUM DISTILLERY

The West Indies Rum Distillery (WIRD) recently celebrated its remarkable 130th anniversary, blending history, music, family, art and the introduction of a special anniversary rum into a memorable event. The celebration kicked off with a guided tour led by the WIRD team, where guests had the chance to view the world's oldest rum pot still, the Rockley, dating back to the 1780s and considered a cherished part of Barbados' heritage. Attendees were encouraged to explore the historic Bond No. 8 barrelhouse, which ended with a rare opportunity for a rum tasting directly from the cask of the renowned Vulcan still, an experience usually restricted from public access. During his presentation, Andrew Hassell, Managing Director of WIRD, shared intriguing historical insights from the distillery's treasure trove of archives within the Distiller's Vault. Mr. Hassell's passion for the rich history of rums and Barbadian heritage shined through as he recounted the epic journey of WIRD and its 130-year-old mission to craft "the world's best Barbadian rum." To commemorate this momentous occasion, WIRD created a one-of-a-kind 130th Anniversary Limited Edition Stades Rum. This rum is a blend created from the most rare distillation apparatus that the distillery is fortunate to possess, including the Vulcan, Gregg Farm and John Dore Franklyn stills. Only 130 cases of this special edition will be available in Barbados exclusively through Stansfeld Scott and at the soon-to-open Stades Visitor Center. Stades Rum 130th Anniversary Limited Edition is bottled at 46% ABV (92 proof). https://www.facebook.com/stadesrum/?locale=hi_IN

COLOURS OF RUM

The Colours of Rum series was born to showcase the best that the rum world has to offer. They have created one of the largest premium rum collections that keeps getting bigger and more diverse. So far, they have uncovered and bottled treasures from Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad, Guadeloupe and Fiji. I expect that Martinique can not be far behind. Their latest releases are:

Jamaica Blend 2008, 14 years, Jamaica edition No. B1 - A new exciting blend of four Jamaican rums: Long Pond 2005 Pot Still, Monymusk 2007 Pot & Column Still, New Yarmouth 2005 Pot Still, Worthy Park 2008 Pot Still. 14 years of continental aging in an ex-rum cask and bottled at 58,9% ABV.

T.D.L 2009, 13 years, Trinidad edition No. 5 - TDL stands for Trinidad Distillers Ltd. and it is actually the company behind the Angostura rum brand. This Colours of Rum expression was distilled in a column still and was aged in ex-bourbon barrels for 13 years, 10 years of which were tropical aging, The rum was bottled in 2023 at 62,8% ABV.

Enmore 1994, 29 years, Guyana edition No. 9 - The Enmore sugar estate was established by Edward Henry Porter in the early 19th century. The distillery was once the home of the famed wooden stills, closed in 1994 before the equipment was moved to DDL's Diamond distillery where it sits today. Enmore no. 9 was produced at Versailles Single Wooden Pot

Still (REV). This expression has spent 29 years in an ex-rum cask and was bottled in 2023 at 45,8% ABV.

Hampden 2012, 11 years, Jamaica edition No. 14 - A pot-distilled rum from Hampden distillery in Jamaica. This 11yo Jamaican rum was distilled in 2012 in a pot still, and matured in an ex-bourbon barrel in the tropics for 3 years before being moved to Europe. It was bottled in 2023 at 60,4% ABV. <https://coloursofrum.com/>

BEENLEIGH DISTILLERY

Beenleigh Distillery has unveiled its Dragon Release Rum, a limited-edition rum crafted from a selection of rum aged in barrel for up to eight years, and in tribute to 2024 the Year of the Dragon. Master-distilled in The Old Copper, a distinctive Copper Pot Still that's signature shape and style is known as a Vat Still, is the only one of its kind in Australia.

The exclusive launch comes as Beenleigh Distillery triumphed at the Australian International Rum Awards, the prestigious competition that's solely focused on rum and cane spirits from around the world. Beenleigh's Double Cask Rum scored an impressive 94 points, clinching the trophy for best Pot and Column Still Rum in addition to winning a Double Gold medal. "We are humbled to compete and be recognized on the Global Stage once again. This accolade at the Australian International Rum Awards underscores our commitment to excellence and innovation in the world of spirits," says Chris Illman, Beenleigh Distillery Head of Sales & Marketing. <https://www.beenleighrum.com.au/>

GOSLINGS

Gosling's is celebrating its fifth annual release of Papa Seal Single Barrel Rum at the Gosling's Wine Cellar on December 2nd. The company said the "father of all rums" has always been released in late November or early December, selling out every year. Malcolm Gosling, president of Gosling's Export (Bermuda) Ltd, said: "Five years ago we released our first single barrel rum on a rainy Tuesday in early December. We had no idea how the public would react but when we had a line outside of our store in the rain at 8.45am and completely sold out 45 minutes after opening, we knew our customers were excited, to say the least." Andrew Holmes, Brand Director of Goslings Rum, said, "Papa Seal Single Barrel Rum is blended from pot and column distilled rums ranging between 10 and 21 years, aged in hand-selected once-used bourbon barrels, and married in American White Oak for an additional two years in Bermuda's humid, salty air. Each barrel is carefully looked after and rolled at least once a week to ensure the liquid in constant contact with the wood. Each bottle is then filled and labeled by hand and individually numbered by Goslings Master Blender Alexander Holmes. <https://www.goslingsrum.com/>

“GOT RUM?” TEAM INTERVIEW

by Margaret Ayala

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK



This issue is kindly dedicated to the best team of writers that Luis and I could have ever hoped for:

- **Cris Dehlavi**
- **Marco Pierini**
- **Mike Kunetka**
- **Paul Senft**
- **Philip Ili Barake**



We also want to thank the growing community of “Got Rum?” readers around the world ... a big CHEERS to all of you!

Margaret Ayala, Publisher

Putting together a monthly magazine is not an easy task. Thankfully for us at “Got Rum?”, we have the world’s best contributing writers, who tirelessly produce content for us, month after month.

It is easy, however, for readers to lose track of the people behind the stories, so each December we reserve space for all contributors to share a bit of information about themselves, their achievements, goals and observations.

Here is a quick update from Luis and me:

- “Got Rum?” has been in existence for 22 years now and its circulation has reached an all-time high, thanks in great part to a boom in the



consumption of premium rums around the world.

- Rum Central has moved into its new warehouse complex, from where it will be able to keep up with the increasing demand for bulk rum. The increased space will allow for even more specialty cask finishes than before, along with faster turnaround times.
- Starting in 2024, Rum Central will also offer a regular supply of freshly-emptied rum barrels for distilleries, wineries and breweries to age or to finish their products.
- Craft distilleries around the world continue to raise the bar and to incorporate the latest technologies into their business plans, mostly

with favorable, well-received results. This does not go unnoticed and large distilleries are also adapting their practices to reflect the higher expectations from consumers and policy makers.

- The Rum University continues to be part of Moonshine University's Rum Curriculum, stay tuned for additional, advanced training classes that will be offered in 2024.

I wish all a very happy holiday season and hope that 2024 brings us all even more good news about our beloved rum industry!

Margaret

TEAM INTERVIEW: CRIS DEHLAVI

by Margaret Ayala



inexperienced. It is still an ongoing issue in a lot of places. The good news is that people are out dining though, and restaurants are busy!

Q: This year we saw a large increase in our bulk rum sales destined for RTD products. Do you think that RTDs continue to increase in popularity or has the trend flattened?

It definitely seems that the category has grown and continues to do so. I worked closely with Charles Joly many, many years ago with Craffhouse Cocktails, and it was such a new category, with little to no competition. Now it seems everyone is doing an RTD. 2020 started the home bartender, and while some love making cocktails from scratch, there are a lot of people who prefer the RTD.

Q: A couple of months ago you injured your knee during a biking accident. How is your recovery?

I broke my tibia, tore my meniscus, and badly ruptured my ACL. I had surgery 12 weeks ago to fix it all and have been doing physical therapy 2x a week ever since. I was in a leg brace and crutches for 8 weeks, and now just working hard to get back to normal. I should be 100% by late spring.

Q: According to some reports, the hospitality industry has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Does your experience agree with this?

Sadly, no. I am still seeing staffing issues at most restaurants, and the staff they do have is young and often

Q: What are some of the things that you are looking forward to achieving next year?

Well the first thing is getting back to the physical activity I was doing prior to my accident. Rock climbing, hiking, and urban walking. I was walking 15-20 miles a week on local trails. I miss it desperately. Work-wise, I am still educating full-time and still running the CAP program at Tales of the Cocktail and loving all of it. My boyfriend and I are hoping to go to France this year to visit friends, as well as spend some time in Cognac and Champagne. (and rock climb, of course!)

Q: Is there anything else that you'd like to share with our readers?

Just that I appreciate that y'all are still reading and interested! I started writing for "Got Rum?" many years ago and life has changed so much, so many times, over the years. I am so grateful to still be a part of it.

TEAM INTERVIEW: PAUL SENFT

by Margaret Ayala



Q: Another year is coming to an end, and you've had the opportunity (not always pleasure!) of tasting many, many rums, not just for our magazine. Which are some of the most memorable rums from 2023 and why?

It has been an interesting year for blended rums and cask finishes. Standouts for me were Don Q Double Cask Finish Zinfandel Cask, Ron Colon Salvadoreno High Proof Rum, Bayou XO Mardi Gras, and Rhum J.M. Jardin Fruite. Each rum had an interesting flavor profile and demonstrated the skills of the blenders behind the brands.

Q: In addition to reviewing rums for "Got Rum?" and writing your own articles for other outlets, you also offer consulting services to hand-picked clients. How are new companies communicating with consumers? Are there common shortcomings that need to be addressed?

When I think about newer rum brands that are doing it right, Holmes Cay is one of the best at connecting with imbibers by using social media, attending tasting events that focus on consumers and rum enthusiasts, and not being shy about personally connecting with the community at large. By doing this, they have created a strong and loyal following, which is impressive considering that they have only been around for a few years. I believe their personal touch is what has helped them rise above many other new brands.

The most common shortcoming I see in the spirit industry is too much reliance on Instagram. A pretty picture with no substantive information is easily forgettable and does little to generate the interest the brand is trying to obtain.


Q: Do you have any rum-centric trips/vacations planned for next year?

I do not have anything scheduled at this time. I am looking at different options and have not chosen anything that is rum-centric.

Q: What about rum conferences/events?

As far as rum-focused events, I am currently looking at conferences to see if any fit my schedule. In January, I am hosting two charity rum symposiums at the Inuhele Polynesia Pop Culture event in Atlanta and hope to attend the Tales of the Cocktail conference during the summer.

Q: Is there anything else that you'd like to share with our readers?



Thank you for reading. I always appreciate the feedback and conversations that happen after each issue has been published. When you are evaluating rums, please always consider the style of rum, the production methods, maturation, blends, etc., and compare them accordingly. For example, comparing a spiced rum with a 10 year old rum blend is not a fair comparison for either product.

I wish everyone a happy new year and thank you again for reading my work.

TEAM INTERVIEW: PHILIP ILI BARAKE

by Margaret Ayala



Q: How is the economic situation in Chile, particularly as it relates to the hospitality industry? Has your bar (Red Frog) recovered to pre-pandemic levels?

I think the hospitality industry is still imbalanced, sales levels are lower than last year and this is due to several factors: consumers are controlling their spending, there is higher unemployment and banks are working with selected merchants to offer large discounts, which is great for consumers, but it is bad for on-premise establishments.

I had difficulties paying some of our suppliers on time and, once I took care of all outstanding payments and called them to apologize, they would tell me that most of their accounts were going through the same thing.

I really hope the situation can be fixed soon, we need a stronger economy, with higher disposable income levels and more clients

looking for higher quality (instead of lower quality/prices).

Q: A year ago there was a very limited selection of cigars available in Chile, but several new brands have been introduced since then. Is this a signal of a more solid economy, or is it possibly a trend among (new) smokers?

Yes, this is a subject I discussed with some consumers: the increased variety of cigars available, either through e-commerce or in actual stores. For example, a hotel in Santiago now has a Davidoff store inside, which is a huge step in the right direction. Another factor that affected the boom was the purchase by the Chinese of Habanos SA, which resulted in a large increase in prices, forcing many “*Habanos Widows*” to look for new alternatives.

Q: Are you planning to attend any rum conferences in 2024 or do you have any rum-related travels coming up?

I would love to, I always enjoyed going to them, constantly learning during each trip. Given the current economic situation, I’ll have to take a deep breath and put my travel plans on hold for a little while. Without a doubt, some of those festivals have been the most enjoyable experiences of my life.

Q: We know that you enjoy rum versions of classic cocktails. If you were to have a cocktail named after yourself, what would be its inspiration?

I have tried to, but I don’t want to take credit away from time-tested creations. While it is true that one can modify an existing recipe to create a new version, all these cocktails come from

a very flexible origin: you can create new “experiments,” some of which are surprisingly good, but that doesn’t make them original creations, they are simply the result of that moment’s inspiration.

Q: Is there anything else you’d like to share with your fans?

When your mind is fully occupied and you are overcoming a milliard of obstacles, it is then that your creativity is truly tested. Among all my projects, the most interesting and appealing to me is to age rum in the southern part of Chile. I believe that, little by little, and with my partnership with you, based on all the years we’ve been working together, this has the potential to produce something very special, worthy of being ranked alongside the world’s best. I don’t want to promise anything, but if things start to improve (such as an increase in tourism), this can become a beautiful project.

Philip



TEAM INTERVIEW: MARCO PIERINI

by Margaret Ayala



Q: You recently took time off from writing, so that you could focus on research. Has your research uncovered any “hidden gems” of information?

Yes, I needed some time to do research and to rest, too. I have found some interesting documents, even though not exactly “hidden gems”, as I had the luck to discover in the past. However, I have found some Cuban sources, often quoted in the literature, but very difficult to read directly. I will use them for my articles, but I want also simply to translate and publish them to make them available to the English-speaking public.

Q: How is the craft rum (micro distillery) scene in Italy? Are there any noteworthy operations and/or products available?

About craft rum, in Italy there are some new, exciting experiences.

Sicily had an important sugar production for centuries, until the 1700s. And in the 1800s, they also tried their hand at producing rum. Then, the cheaper sugar imported from America led to the demise of the local industry.

Some years ago, in the ancient town of Avola, a visionary entrepreneur began to cultivate sugarcane again and to produce rum with it. The name of the product is AVOLA RUM. It is made from the juice of the cane, unaged, and it is wonderful. One of the best rums I have ever tasted.

Now, two more Sicilian entrepreneurs have begun to produce their rum, which will soon arrive in the market, and others are said to be taking an interest. For an Italian rum lover like me, and for a historian too, it is very exciting.

Q: Did you notice any changes during 2023 in how consumers approach rum, in Italy in particular, or in Europe in general?

I would say that the premiumization is continuing, and the surge of the cocktail scene too. I am sorry, but I am not able to answer this question in a totally reliable way. In the past year, I have travelled very little and I have had few opportunities to attend rum events, to visit the bar scene and to talk with the rum family. So, I do not know if there are any new trends in the Italian and European rum world.



Q: Can we expect a new book from you anytime soon?

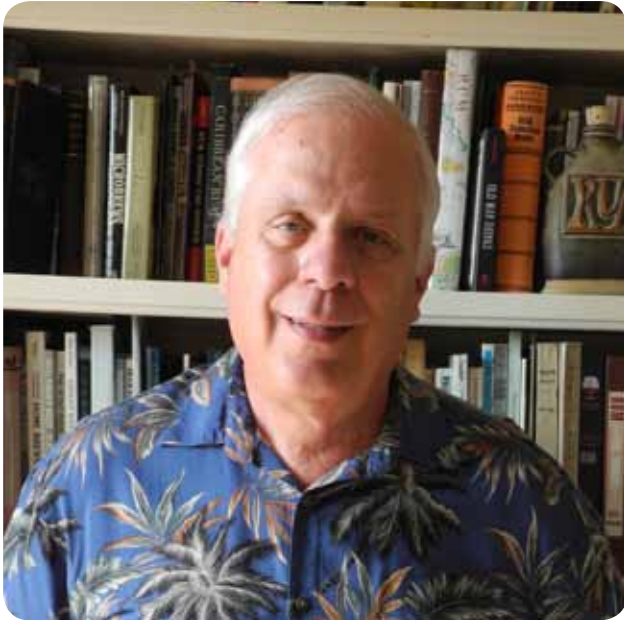
Yes, I hope so. I would like to write a new book about Cuban rum, but at the moment I do not know when I will be able to publish it. Years, unfortunately, do not pass in vain and my energy is not what it used to be.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

Yes, there is, actually. I have been writing for **Got Rum?** for ten years now, and I hope our readers have enjoyed reading my articles quite as much as I have enjoyed writing them.

TEAM INTERVIEW: MIKE KUNETKA

by Margaret Ayala



Q: Another year of rum news has come and gone! Which of this year's stories stood out to you the most and why?

I think the biggest story is **23 | 01 | Bn_Qa**, Mount Gay's first release in its Single Estate Series. This is a rum made from sugarcane grown on their own 300-acre farm. This allows Mount Gay to grow and process cane so that they can make the best possible molasses for this rum. This first release has a long, nine-day fermentation, then it's run-through only a pot still and bottled at 55% ABV. These three elements are different from most Mount Gay products. I love the idea of farm to glass production. A number of distilleries grow their own cane to make fresh cane juice but Mount Gay is the first large distillery, that I am aware, that is growing cane to make their own molasses. And now we know what Maggie Campbell has been secretly working on for the last few years.

The next big story was the release of the **Hampden Jamaican Rum 8 Marks Collection**. This set has 200ml samples of eight different marks (individual distillates) that Hampden Estate uses as building blocks in blending their rums. These unaged rums, bottled at 60% ABV, show the

incredible diversity of Jamaican rums, and Hampden rums in particular. What really makes this set special is the insert that describes each mark in incredible detail. It describes the history, the raw materials, fermentation times and ester breakdowns for each mark. I don't think I have ever seen such transparency. The bottles are big enough for you to taste and compare marks and also create your own Jamaican blend. There is so much to learn here; this is a rum nerd's dream come true. If there are any significant-others out there looking for a holiday gift for their rum-nerd partner, this is it. There are rumors that Hampden will release a second collection in 2024, this time with the same marks being aged one year in ex-bourbon casks and proofed to 52%

Q: Long-term readers of our magazine know that you enjoy blending your own rums. How are your personalized rum blends coming along? What are the next goals in your rum blending journey?

I always remember Luis Ayala quoting Aristotle: "*The whole is always greater than the sum of its parts.*" In our world that would mean taking good/great rums, blending them together and making something greater. I still struggle with that final goal. The idea that Kuleana can blend seven rums to make their Hōkūlei or Black Tot blends nineteen rums to make their Master Blender's Reserve is beyond my comprehension. Right now, I am attempting a winter blend to make Rum Old Fashioneds and a summer blend to make Daiquiris. For the Old Fashioneds I am blending Jamaica and Barbados rums, Smith & Cross and Mount Gay. I am still not happy with the ratios. For Daiquiris, the goal will be something like Foursquare's wonderful Probitas, but with more punch. I am thinking it could be a blend of Jamaica (Worthy Park, maybe) and Barbados or Panama rums.

Q: Are there any rum-related books that have caught your attention recently?

Well, the elephant in the room here is certainly Matt Pietrek's **Modern Caribbean Rum**. At 830+ pages, it is a monster, almost too big to rest in your lap. But it is definitely the encyclopedia of Caribbean Rum. He has done a great job of collecting data and photographs of just about every distillery in the region and his wife, Carrie Smith, did a great job on the layout of the book.

The other book I liked was the quirky **Puerto Rico Rum-Clopedia** by Federico Hernandez. Fede is the man behind the Rum Lab, a promoter of rum festivals in the States and Puerto Rico. It is a brief history of rum in Puerto Rico. Yes, it talks about Bacardi and Destilería Serrallés (Don Q), but it also covers smaller, craft distillers like Club Caribe, Crab island and San Juan Artisan. He writes about blenders and bottlers like Barrilitos and Ron **Rincón** and famous Puerto Rican distilleries of the past. 220 pages, with tons of pictures. He cheekily refers to his book as Version1, as he hopes there is more history of Puerto Rican rum to be written.

Q: Are you planning to visit any distilleries in 2024?

There are two distilleries here in Arizona that have gotten international recognition for their rums. Both, Desert Diamond Distillery and the Elgin Distillery, have won gold medals at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition and the International Wine & Spirits Competition. I have been to both distilleries, but I would like to go back and do deep-dive, nerdy interviews with them like I did with two Hawaiian distilleries earlier this year.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

I would like to close with a toast that I heard Mitch Wilson of Black Tot Rum give. It seems appropriate for the Holiday Season:

*There are Tall Ships,
There are Small Ships,
And there are ships that sail the sea
But the best ships are Friendships,
Here's to you and me.*



CIGAR & RUM PAIRING

by Philip Ili Barake





My 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



Old Days

A few weeks ago I celebrated my birthday, it was a very quiet day, since it landed on a Monday and, even if I could take the day off, most friends would not be able to join me. Instead, my best friends stopped by the bar and we had a few drinks, very quietly. One of my friends, David (a cigar and culinary aficionado), with whom we did a pairing a few years ago, gifted me a Wide Churchill (55 x 130mm) from Romeo y Julieta. This is a format introduced by the brand in 2010, the same year I competed in the Habanosommelier contest in Cuba, where I won and created memories that I will treasure for the rest of my life.

I did not smoke this habano when I received it, instead I saved it for this pairing with Ron Zacapa XO. This rum has not been aged for 25 years, as some people suggest, but it is a blend of different aged rums that are finished in French, ex-Cognac barrels. The taste is very good, not as sweet as Zacapa 23, suffice it to say that Zacapa 23 can be used in mixology, to create many of the cocktails we've done pairings with, whereas Zacapa XO is best enjoyed neat or with ice.

I lit up the cigar after a straight cut with a double-bladed guillotine, since it is a very thick cigar, true to its name. The draw was very good, not hard at all, and the first third was full of warm aromas and subtle touches of Cuban tobacco. Meanwhile, the rum was also a bit warm, with an intense oak finish, resulting in a well-balanced first third, very reminiscent of my pairings in Cuba: I was much younger and inexperienced, and was eager to



Photo credit: @Cigarili



Photo credit: @Cigarili

absorb everything, such as, pairings between Habanos and Armagnac. The experiences were overwhelming, but I remember how happy I was, with all the steps and flavors.

When the first third of the cigar was nearing completion, I recalled that in my second competition in Cuba, I had an Old Fashioned made with two rums: one was a Smith & Cross Navy Strength, a 100% pot still rum at 57% ABV, which needed to be chilled in a mixing glass. The second rum was Ron Zacapa XO, which I poured directly into the glass when the first cocktail was finished, garnished with an orange peel to accentuate the oils and aromas. All of this reminded me of humidors and cigar boxes, with all the wooden notes, the core of my first years in Cuba.

While I was smoking the cigar and enjoying this pairing, a friend of mine approached me at the bar as he was on his way out (he normally likes to play on the arcade machine that we have near the exit). He told me that his brother smokes cigars and was an avid fan of Habanos. It was a pleasant conversation and his brother joined us via telephone and, as it turns out, we already knew of

each other but had never met in person. I quickly reached for another snifter and poured some rum for my friend and, while he said it was tasty and finished the entire glass out of respect, it was not his preferred beverage.

This is what pairings is all about: recalling old times, old friends and old stories. Sometimes it is hard to re-live those experiences until you have a rum or a cigar that ignites those special memories. In my case, the pairing helped me re-live exquisite experiences from my past, so much so that I continued enjoying the memories even while I laid in bed that night. These are the ideal experiences, especially if you can find something as memorable as a box of the first cigar you smoked: invite the friends with whom you created that first memory and you'll see how a simple pairing will evolve into a special night. I hope you are able to re-live experiences from your past, you'll enjoy them more than you can imagine. I truly hope so.

Cheers!
Philip Ili Barake
#GRCigarPairing



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