

# Got Rum?®

JANUARY 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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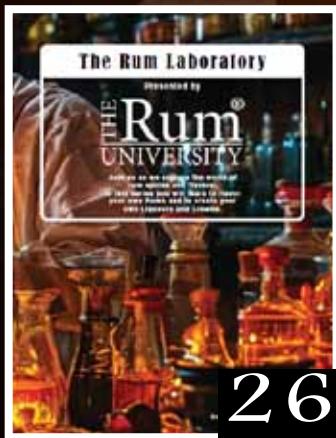
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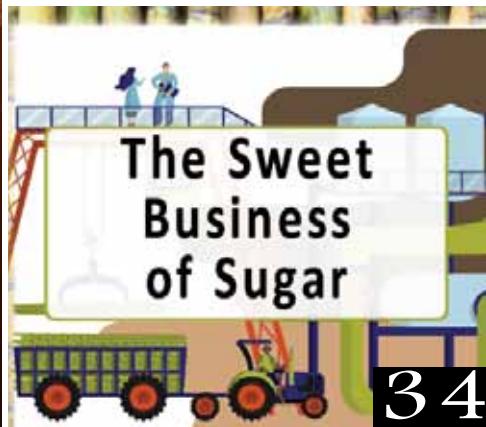
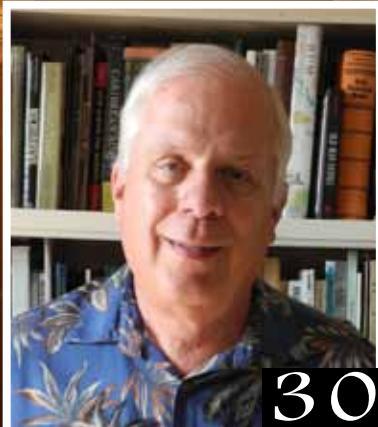


# CONTENTS

JANUARY 2026

- 5 FROM THE EDITOR
- 6-9 THE ANGEL'S SHARE - RUM REVIEWS
- 10-13 COOKING WITH RUM
- 14-17 THE RUM MIXOLOGIST
- 18-19 THE RUM UNIVERSITY® LIBRARY
- 22-25 THE RUM HISTORIAN
- 26-29 THE RUM LABORATORY
- 30-33 RUM IN THE NEWS
- 34-54 THE SWEET BUSINESS OF SUGAR
- 56-59 THE HISTORY AND SCIENCE OF THE BARREL
- 60-63 CIGAR AND RUM PAIRING

2026



# Got Rum?®

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Editor and Publisher:	<a href="mailto:luis@gotrum.com">luis@gotrum.com</a>
Executive Editor:	<a href="mailto:margaret@gotrum.com">margaret@gotrum.com</a>
Cigar and Rum:	<a href="mailto:philip@gotrum.com">philip@gotrum.com</a>
Angel's Share:	<a href="mailto:paul@gotrum.com">paul@gotrum.com</a>
Rum Historian:	<a href="mailto:marco@gotrum.com">marco@gotrum.com</a>
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Cooking with Rum:	<a href="mailto:sue@gotrum.com">sue@gotrum.com</a>
Webmaster:	<a href="mailto:web@gotrum.com">web@gotrum.com</a>
Director of Photography:	<a href="mailto:art@gotrum.com">art@gotrum.com</a>

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**[news@gotrum.com](mailto:news@gotrum.com)**

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FRONT COVER: Rise And Shine  
INSIDE SPREAD: A Jump Of Faith

# FROM THE EDITOR

## *Transformative Change*

Change has always been difficult to cope with: many people and organizations regard it as a hurdle or obstacle that must be avoided. Others view it as a failure in the planning process, and fewer even -perhaps the wisest- embrace it as an unavoidable consequence of life/business.

Every day is a good day to evaluate if changes are needed in our routines or in our professional or spiritual outlooks, but early January seems to be a particularly powerful time of the year to do so.

Most of us have read the headlines or have experienced the news first-hand: businesses are shutting down, economic forecasts are being downgraded, people are losing their jobs and consumer trends are reflecting these uncertainties.

Many of our readers are distillery or brand owners, many more are employed at different levels by the distilled spirits industry, so I know that these words paint a very real picture for them.

Last month I wrote that the USA lost 25% of its craft distilleries between August 2024 and August 2025, and the industry reports pointed at a much darker figure by the end of 2025. Even giants, such as Jim Beam, are being affected by the adverse conditions, so how are the small players supposed to survive?

Philosopher and writer Alan Watts (1915-1973) famously wrote:

*“The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.”*

He also advocated that clinging to permanence is as futile as clinging to a single note of music in a song. But *Simple Change* and *Transformative Change* are very different in their impact and longevity. To design and implement true



*Transformative Change*, you must have not only a concise blueprint/vision of the result, but also a clearly defined execution plan that is broken down into quantifiable, atomic, actionable items.

I invite you to set time aside for solitude contemplation of change, then to engage in collaborative brainstorming sessions with your friends or colleagues. As always, I'm available to discuss approaches or to lend a helping hand executing change strategies. Don't underestimate your ability to change, once you fully commit to the plunge, like Alan Watts cleverly stated.

Cheers!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Luis Ayala".

Luis Ayala, *Editor and Publisher*

 <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!

## Kula Toasted Coconut Rum

A few years ago, I reviewed Kula Organic rum and made a note to review the other rums in the line. While shopping I spotted this expression and decided it was time to revisit this rum line. The Kula Rum line is manufactured on the island of Maui, Hawaii, by Hawaiian Sea Spirits LLC, along with a vodka, gin, and spiced rum. The company ferments fresh sugarcane juice, then distills it to create the rum using column stills. They claim to use deep ocean mineral water as part of their blending process. For this rum, they use Kula Organic rum as the base and then infuse toasted coconut to create this product. After the infusion, the rum is blended to 35% ABV and bottled for distribution.

### Appearance

The 750 ml custom designed bottle has a black opaque wrap with gold script going down the front of the bottle. The bottle is sealed with a yellow screw cap. The labels are small and provide the minimum information required to sell the product. The new bottle design is an improvement over the original and is much easier to handle.

The liquid is a soft yellow primrose color with bits of coconut suspended in it. Swirling the rum presents a thin band that spins off fast moving legs that evaporate quickly, leaving behind beads and residue in its wake.

### Nose

The aroma of the rum is the expected coconut forward, sweet vanilla, and fruit, with a mineral tang at the end of the experience.

## Palate

The first sip delivers a balance of barely smoked coconut, fruit juice, minerals, salt, and baking caramel. The mouthfeel is thin and underwhelming, as additional sips provide a papery flavor flatness that combats unpleasant acidity and chemical/mineral flavors in the profile. This combination of flavors unfortunately forms the finish and lingers on the palate for quite some time.

## Review

When I travel to new locations, I am always interested in trying products made in that state or country. I had seen Kula in Hawaii and decided not to purchase it due to the size and weight of the original bottle design. Sadly, except for the new bottle design, this product was a complete disappointment. When evaluating flavored rums, I always ask the question, "Did the company succeed in capturing the desired flavors?" In the case of this product, the company was completely unsuccessful. The toasted flavor was only lightly present and overwhelmed by some of the other negative flavors in the profile. Due to this, when mixing it with other ingredients, the negative aspects of the rum dominate, creating negative flavor experiences. There are far superior toasted coconut rum products in the marketplace, and I recommend choosing one of those before purchasing this rum.

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# THE ANGEL'S SHARE

by Paul Senft

## Trovador Inspirado Double Barrel Aged Rum

The Trovador Inspirado rum brand was created in honor of the brand's cultural ambassador, Raul Malo, the Grammy winning lead singer of the Mavericks. This rum is a blend of three rums that are aged for a minimum of three years. Two of the rums are distilled in the Dominican Republic, and a third "Cuban style" rum of unknown origin is the final part of the blend. Together they are transported to the United States to Nashville, Tennessee, where they are put in new American white oak barrels and finished for an unspecified amount of time. The final product is blended and bottled by Colton Weinstein and Kevin Trevathan at 43% ABV.

### Appearance

The 750 ml bottle is sealed with a wooden-capped synthetic cork secured with a logoed paper sticker wrapped around the top. The multicolored labels provide a substantial amount of information about the rum and the inspiration behind its creation.

The liquid is a solid golden amber in the bottle that lightens to a straw color in the glass. Swirling the liquid created a thick band that spun off multiple rounds of legs before beading up and leaving a ring of residue around the glass.

### Nose

The aroma of the rum leads with brown sugar toffee and ethyl alcohol

notes that are followed by dried fruit and a pop of black pepper. Baking spice notes and toasted oak, with a nip of acetone, round out the nosing experience.

### Palate

The first sip delivers a swirl of caramel and vanilla and alcohol that conditions the palate with its chewy density. Additional sips reveal notes of dried apricot, black pepper, orange zest, tannic oak acidity, nutmeg, a hint of char, saline, and oak. The oak and vanilla notes linger in a long peppery finish.

### Review

It is always intriguing to see a rum blend that uses a combination of tropical and continental aging, as it can test the ability of the blenders. With this rum blend, I believe the combination of the new oak finish helped balance the flavor profile and added a boost to it. In the end, the blenders succeeded in creating an interesting multifunctional rum that is easy to sip as well as work with several rum cocktail recipes. There is too much going on in the flavor profile for a daiquiri; this rum is more suited to be used in a piña colada, hot buttered rum, jungle bird, or rum runner cocktail.



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# COOKING WITH RUM

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

by Chef Susan Whitley





## Stuffed Cornish Hens

### Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp. Olive Oil
- ½ C. Celery, chopped
- ¼ C. White Onion, chopped
- 3 C. Crumbled Cornbread
- 3 C. Soft Breadcrumbs
- 1 jar (2 oz.) Diced Pimientos, drained
- ¾ C. Chicken Broth
- ¼ C. Dark Rum
- 1 Large Egg
- ½ tsp. Poultry Seasoning
- ¼ tsp. Dried Thyme Leaves
- ½ tsp. Salt

- ¼ tsp. Ground Black Pepper
- 2 Cornish Hens (20 to 24 ounces each)

### For Basting:

- ¼ C. Butter, divided
- 1 Garlic Clove, minced
- 1 tsp. Grated Lemon Zest
- ¾ tsp. Fresh Mint, chopped (or ¼ tsp. dried mint flakes)
- ½ tsp. Salt
- ¼ tsp. Ground Black Pepper

### Directions:

1. For the stuffing: In a large skillet (or saucepan), sauté celery and onion in 1 tablespoon olive oil until tender. Remove from heat. Stir in cornbread, breadcrumbs, pimientos, chicken broth, rum, egg, poultry seasoning, thyme leaves, salt and pepper; mix well.
2. Stuff each hen with ¾ cup stuffing. Place extra stuffing in a greased 1 quart baking dish; refrigerate. Place hens breast side up on a rack in a greased 13 x 9 inch baking dish. Cover loosely with foil; bake at 375°F for 45 to 50 minutes.
3. For Basting: In a saucepan, melt the butter; add garlic, lemon zest, mint, salt and pepper. Brush over hens. Bake for an additional 25 minutes or until thermometer reads 180°F for hens and 165°F for stuffing. Bake the extra stuffing, covered, for 30 minutes.

Yields 2 servings.



Photo credit: juliassimplysouthern.com

## Cranberry Sauce

### Ingredients:

- 12 oz. Cranberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$  C. white sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  C. Brown Sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$  C. Orange Juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  C. Dark Rum, divided (2 Tablespoons)

### Directions:

1. Dissolve both sugars in orange juice in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add 2 tablespoons of dark rum.
2. Stir in cranberries and cook until they start to pop and sauce starts to thicken, about 8 to 10 minutes.
3. Remove from heat and add the remaining rum. Stir well and place sauce in a bowl. Note- Sauce will continue to thicken as it cools. Ready to serve



Photo credit: [thecozycook.com](http://thecozycook.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.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a hand pouring rum from a dark bottle into a clear glass. The glass is filled with ice cubes and a golden-brown rum. The background is dark and out of focus.

# THE Rum<sup>®</sup> UNIVERSITY

Got Rum? January 2026 - 16



# THE RUM Mixologist

This Month's Cocktail:  
Kingston Negroni

## About the Kingston Negroni

Created in 2010 by Joaquín Simó (bartender and partner in New York City bar Pouring Ribbons), this cocktail is based on the classic Negroni, but substituting the gin for a high-esters rum. The result is uniquely "rummie" in the funkiest way possible.

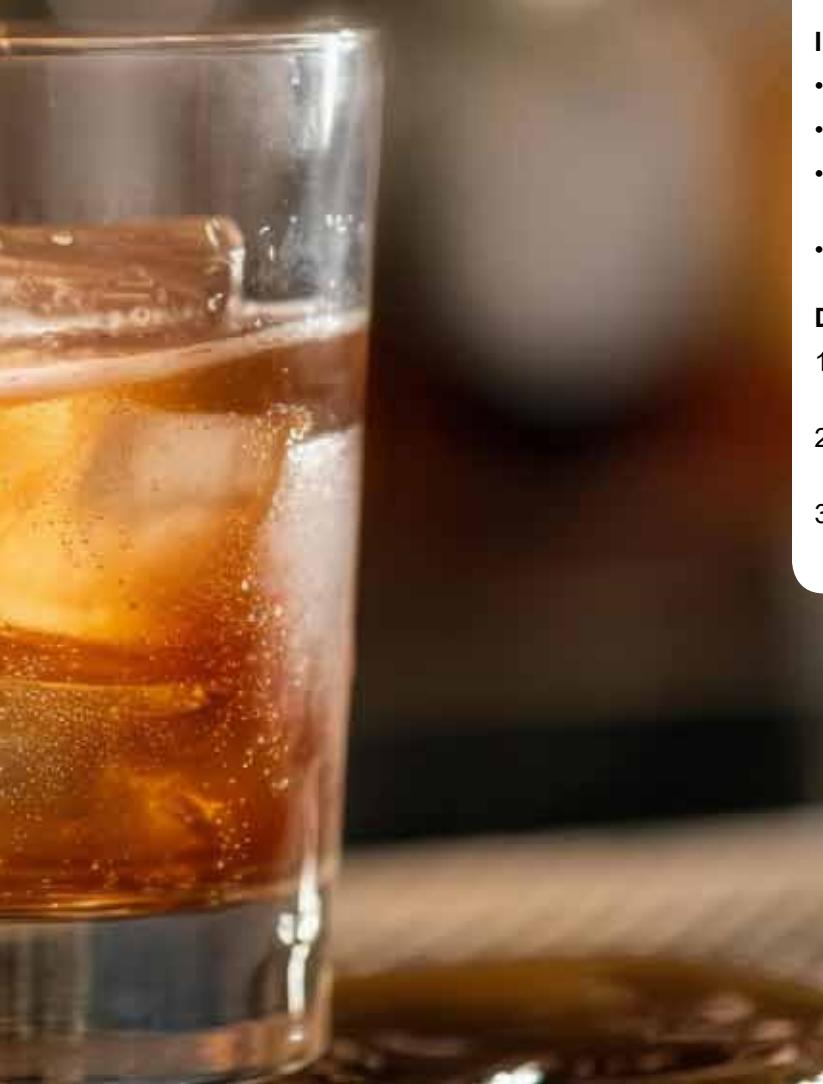
## Kingston Negroni

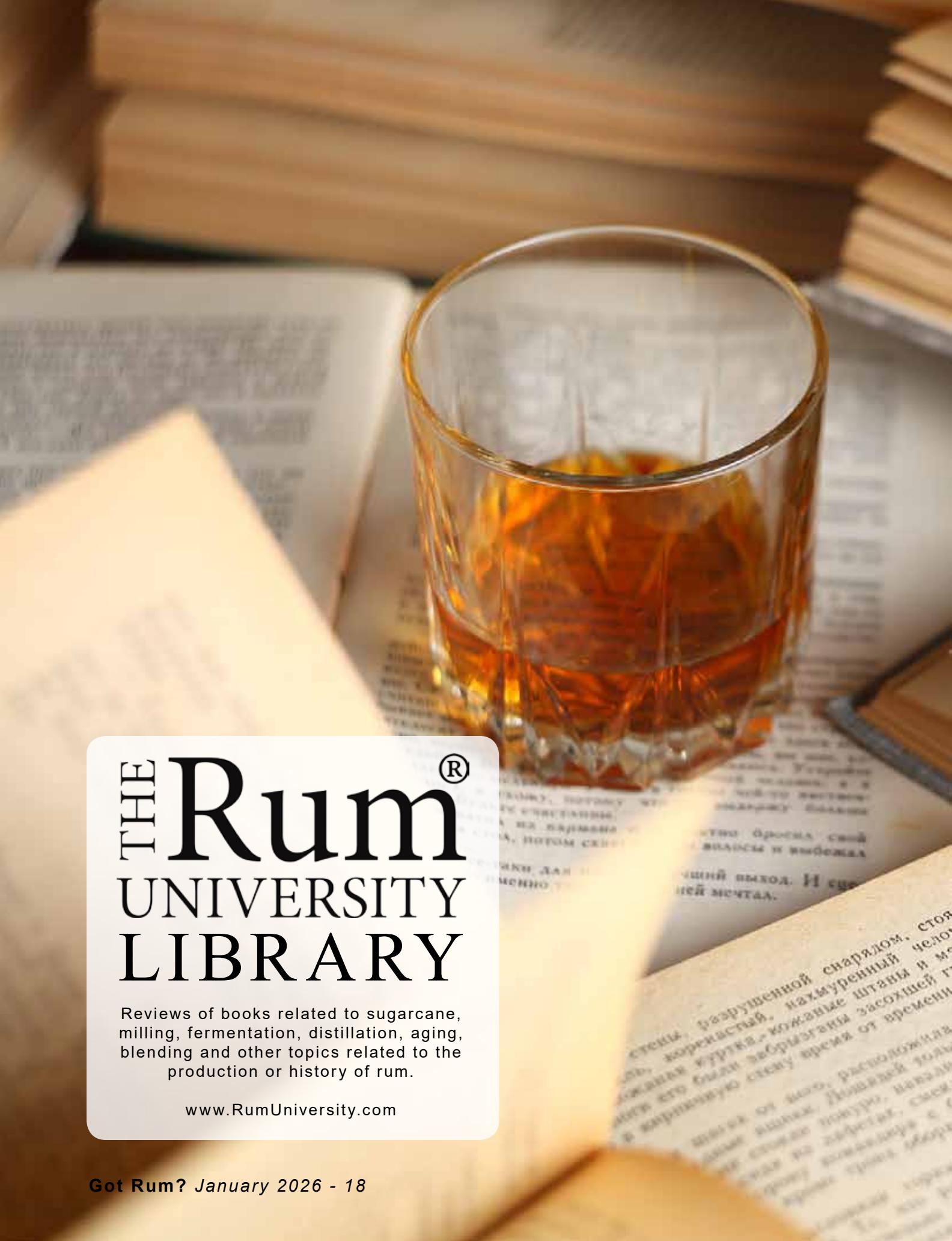
### Ingredients:

- 1 ounce Smith & Cross Jamaican rum
- 1 ounce Campari
- 1 ounce Carpano Antica sweet vermouth
- Garnish: orange peel

### Directions:

1. Add all ingredients into a mixing glass with ice and stir until well-chilled.
2. Strain into a rocks glass over one large ice cube.
3. Garnish with a long, trimmed strip of orange peel.





# 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)

# Cocktail Chemistry: The Art and Science of Drinks from Iconic TV Shows and Movies

## by Nick Fisher

### (Publisher's Review)

"Cocktail Chemistry offers the essential knowledge, techniques, and flair for creating perfectly mixed drinks at home."

—Bartender Magazine

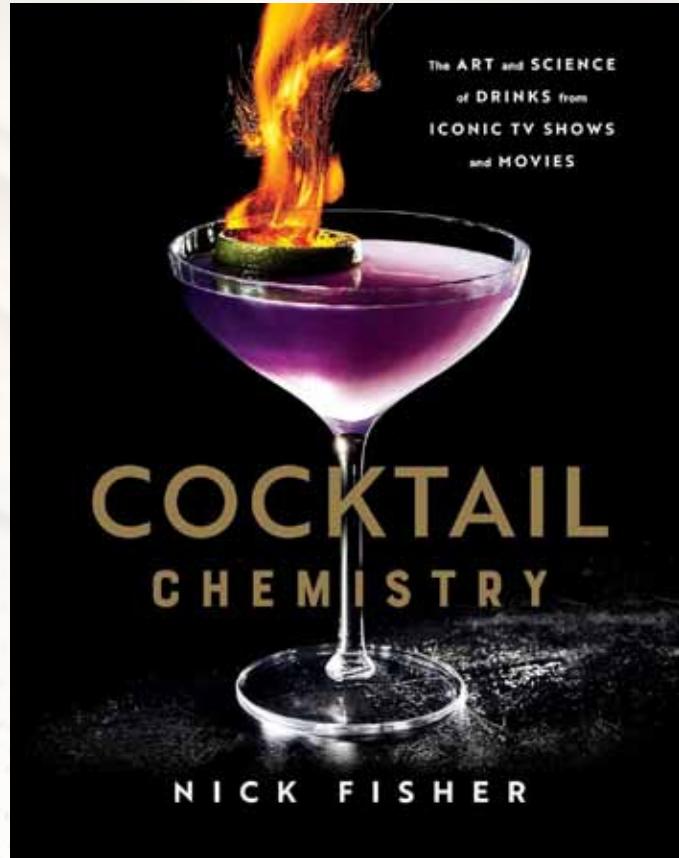
Enjoy clever, pop culture-inspired drinks with this collection of more than 80 recipes from the beloved Cocktail Chemistry YouTube channel.

Have you ever seen a delicious-looking drink on your favorite movie or TV show and wondered how to make it? Well, now you can, with this collection of recipes from the creator of the popular Cocktail Chemistry YouTube channel Nick Fisher.

Featuring recipes to recreate the classic White Russian from *The Big Lebowski*, the iconic martini from the James Bond movies, to drinks featured in *Mad Men*, *The Simpsons*, *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, *Game of Thrones*, *The Office*, *Harry Potter*, and more, *Cocktail Chemistry* will have you impressing your friends with your bartending skills in no time. In addition to recipes, *Cocktail Chemistry* includes everything you need to know to become a mixology expert, from how to make perfectly clear ice, delicious foams, and infusions, or how to flame a citrus peel. A must-have for all aspiring home mixologists and pop-culture buffs, *Cocktail Chemistry* will ensure you never have a boring drink again.

### About the Author

Nick Fisher cut his teeth in New York City during the burgeoning cocktail renaissance where he learned to appreciate a craft cocktail made with fresh ingredients, but it took a "Cocktails 101" class at a San Francisco speakeasy to spark a creative passion in home bartending. It wasn't long until he was experimenting with advanced techniques such as putting a cocktail inside a ball of ice only to smash it open, revealing the drink. In 2014, he created the YouTube channel *Cocktail Chemistry* to showcase these techniques, and it quickly rose to one of the most-watched cocktail channels.



His creative and unique takes on classic cocktails combined with beautiful visuals and easy-to-follow instructions are designed for aspiring home bartenders looking to get started, as well as cocktail enthusiasts looking for innovative new techniques. Nick lives in San Francisco with his wife and young daughter, who prefers to drink straight from the bottle.

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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"

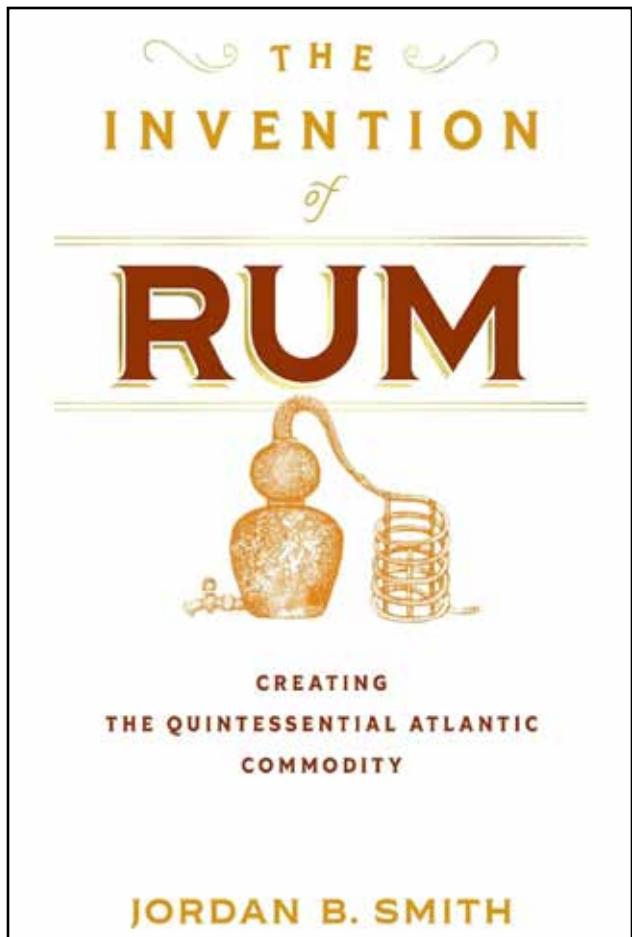
In 2020, with my son Claudio, I have published a new book "FRENCH RUM – A History 1639-1902".



## REVIEW JORDAN SMITH "THE INVENTION OF RUM" 2025

It's been 10 years since, thanks to Luis Ayala, I had the pleasure of getting acquainted with Professor Jordan Smith. Alas, it was only an acquaintance by pen – or rather, by keyboard – but nonetheless, an incredibly stimulating one. I read some of his articles and we exchanged a few opinions on what Professor Smith calls the "Invention" of Rum. Moreover, he kindly provided me with valuable material for my own research on American Rum. Some time ago I read his PHD Dissertation and now his fine book, just published: "THE INVENTION OF RUM Creating the Quintessential Atlantic Commodity", 2025.

Professor Smith's book is one of the few works on the history of Rum written by a Scholar, and it is rich in information and reflections, an important contribution to the understanding of our favorite subject, impossible to summarize adequately in the brief space of a Review. I have therefore decided to present some excerpts, focusing on the origin of the new beverage, which, I hope, will spark the interests of our readers and encourage the reading of the full text.



The few existing studies on the History of Rum often start from the much better-known History of Sugar, a far more important commodity "which was responsible for more than 3 percent of the British gross domestic product late in the eighteenth century. ... But understanding the history of rum is about more than amending how we make sense of the history of sugar (as important as that is). It also exposes something substantively new about the Atlantic world. The invention of rum rested on a fledgling idea that a combination of labor, ingenuity, and technology could shape-shift trash into treasure. Specifically, the detritus generated by early modern sugar production was no longer simply disposed of but was collected, mixed, fermented, distilled, packaged, shipped, sold, and consumed. Making, marketing, and drinking rum constituted a new kind of alchemy, almost magically transmuting the

physical characteristic of matter – and equally firm attitudes – to conjure a highly desired comestible."

"The invention of rum – a process and not just a moment – depended on the sorts of tinkering that remain integral to modern production and profit making." Professor Smith has carried out extensive research, drawing from sources of exceptional interests. His book "incorporates evidence from forty-five libraries and archives in Barbados, Jamaica, England, Wales, Scotland, and the United States. It also draws from digitized versions of newspapers and rare books, published document collections, and rapidly expanding digital archives." And here allow me a personal note: what a marvel! And what envy! How I wish I had such a wealth of qualified sources at my disposal.

The book focuses on Barbados and the British Empire, and explains the reasons for their importance: "People in Britain, its colonies, and the space where British traders operated embraced rum because it met individual tastes while simultaneously serving many goals of empire. Starting in the mid-seventeenth century, English colonizers grasped the incredible potential of repurposing the waste products of colonial sugar plantations as a distilled spirit that could lessen their dependence on continental European brandies and wines. Intent on protecting domestic viniculture, Spanish and French officials found the possibility of colonial rum industries threatening for precisely the same reasons, and they actively discouraged alcohol production as a result. Geography circumscribed rum's potential within other empires. Dutch colonies centered on exceedingly small islands unfit for widespread sugar cultivation. And while Brazil exported tremendous volumes of sugar-derived spirits to Angola, its production took place in centralized mills and distilleries in the South Atlantic with few connections to the North Atlantic. Non-British sugar plantations sometimes

produced rum or a close analogue, but published treatises on distilling and private correspondences of distillers alike rarely reveal distilling practices or even preferred qualities for rum being consistently shared between metropoles. These empires were far from hermetically sealed, however. Colonists in Brazil and French Caribbean experimented with making alcohol from sugar in the seventeenth century, and Indigenous people transported from South America to Barbados introduced new alcohols to English settlers on the island. North American distillers transformed molasses smuggled through Dutch and French entrepôts into rum despite British mercantilist policies designed to outlaw this activity. In West Africa and the American interior alike, French and Danish traders sometimes found little recourse other than to acquire and resell rum produced in Britain and its colonies. While each of these transimperial contexts is described in this book, whether the patterns observed in British Atlantic contexts can be traced in the archives generated by these localities and other empires await further study.”

This book “examines rum’s place in the Atlantic world from the moment of its creation around 1640 until its meaning and utility became harder to change by 1810.”

Professor Smith then states that “The invention of rum was never so simple. Native, African, and European people possessed – and created anew – their own ideas about both alcohol and best way to make it. ... Piecing together the creative collisions between distinct cultures of alcohol production in three places purported to be cradles of rum production – Brazil, The French West Indies, and, especially, Barbados – reveals processes of experimentation that drew in people and ideas originating in Europe, Africa, and the Americas and ultimately created something new.”

In pre-Columbian America, many fermented beverages were known,

but distillation was not. “The earliest European stills date back to twelfth-century Italy. It is unlikely that this technology existed in West Africa or the Americas before Europeans established trade centers in those places in the early modern period.” “Although sugarcane was transported to earlier sites of colonization in the Atlantic and Caribbean islands, plantation production in the Americas first prospered in Brazil, and a strain of accompanying experiments regarding its alcoholic potential began there too. ... It was only in the early seventeenth century, however, that both the consumption of sugar by-products and the practice of distillation became commonplace.”

According to Professor Smith, the earliest steps in the history of Rum are shrouded in obscurity. “Nobody recorded when somebody in Barbados – or Brazil or Martinique – first collected sugary wastes, fermented them, loaded them into a still, and decided to consume the resulting product. Nobody asked how early makers knew what they did”

At the outset, the new drink had little value; it was consumed only locally and did not even have a name, but things changed rapidly. “By the 1660s, and more so by the 1680s, sales of rum produced in Barbados and sent to distant markets added considerably to the island’s economy. ... The many hands that rum passed through from plantation to market exacerbated the need for a standard name for the commodity. Early observers used different names for the spirit before beginning to settle on the modern name for their invention in the 1650s. Befitting a commodity whose invention was shrouded in mystery but depended on the presence of Indigenous, African, and European knowledge of alcohol production, the origin of the name remains opaque. ... By the mid-1650s, the term was in use in both Barbados and North America.” And later, in 1684, in the aftermath of a fiscal quarrel with a Scottish rum distillery,

"The exchequer dictated, however, that any distillate removed from the distillery 'must be marked with the word RUM'. The mandated label unequivocally established the linkage between the Scottish distilleries and their American counterparts in terms of what they made."

Yes, because very soon, indeed quite early, rum production expanded well beyond Barbados. "By 1660, Massachusetts distillers began to focus their efforts on distilling Caribbean molasses into local variants of rum. ... Thomas Ruck, who traded with the Drax family and outfitted ships to trade foodstuffs for sugar in Barbados by 1648, began retailing spirits from Boston in 1653 and became a licensed distiller in 1658. Likewise, a London merchant named Simon Lynde settled in Boston by 1650 and bought a brewery (which he then converted to a distillery), a warehouse, and a wharf in the city in 1653. While Lynde continued to focus on trade to West Indies, he hired a distiller to turn his imports into New England rum. Distillery owners and operators attracted the disdain of Massachusetts' governing bodies by 1661 when the general court complained of abuses by retailers of rum and 'by the distillers thereof' and outlawed liquor sales smaller than a quarter cask. Legislating against small liquor transactions was one popular way to price laboring people out of the alcohol trade."

All over the British World, "Producers endeavored to make stronger and better-tasking rum more efficiently and in new places. This experimentation thrived on the frequent exchange of information ... People moving throughout Britain's Atlantic world carrying ideas about how to make rum linked the seventeenth-century origins of the industry to eighteenth-century innovation."

If the 1600s may be considered the pioneering century, it is in the 1700s that rum reached its maturity: distinct kinds emerged and prices varied accordingly.

For example, "In 1764, the *Georgia Gazette* listed the price of Jamaica rum at four shillings per gallon; Barbados and Antigua rum at three shillings, sixpence; New York rum at two shillings, four pence; and New England rum at two shillings, two pence."

In conclusion, although I do not always entirely agree with Professor Smith, his work is undoubtedly a *must read* for every scholar and enthusiast of the subject. Moreover, it proved useful to me in correcting an error of mine.

In fact, in my article **HISTORY OF CUBAN RUM 16. THE RON LIGERO CUBANO** in the February 2024 issue of our magazine, regarding the emergence of the new type of rum in Cuba during the second half of the 1800s, I had written: "Last, but not least, ageing. Cuban distillers were maybe the first to consciously and deliberately age rum on a large scale, to deeply improve the product."

Well, I was mistaken, because Professor Smith documents the practice of aging rum to improve its perceived quality, as well as the tricks to deceive the consumer, as early as the 1700s: "As a plantation operator explained in 1756, 'We never think our rum in Barbados in any degree of perfection under three years old, the older the better'. Producers and consumers in the Americas and Britain thus associated the darker West Indian rums with the premium, aged product. Before even tasting the rum, merchants and consumers assumed that this process imparted a smoother, mellower, and sweeter taste. Sometimes the taste, strength, or color of rum diverged from what tasters expected, however. Such discrepancies could result from producers trying to emulate other styles of rum they had encountered. For instance, caramel-colored rum that did not exude the tasting notes of being aged was likely dyed with tea leaves or burnt sugar."

Marco Pierini



THE Rum®  
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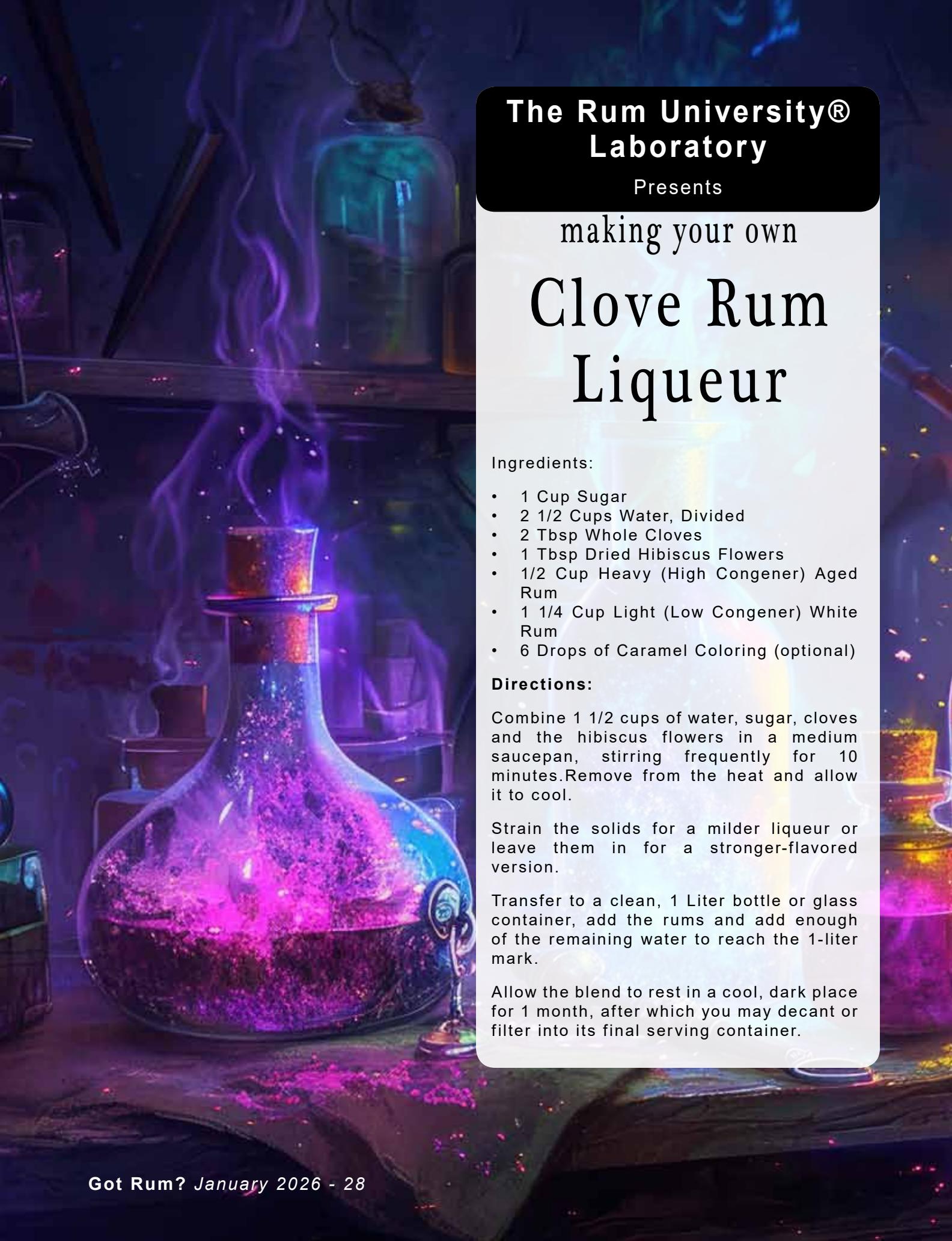
Got Rum? January 2026 - 26

# The Rum Laboratory

Presented by

THE **Rum**<sup>®</sup>  
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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

# Clove Rum Liqueur

#### Ingredients:

- 1 Cup Sugar
- 2 1/2 Cups Water, Divided
- 2 Tbsp Whole Cloves
- 1 Tbsp Dried Hibiscus Flowers
- 1/2 Cup Heavy (High Congener) Aged Rum
- 1 1/4 Cup Light (Low Congener) White Rum
- 6 Drops of Caramel Coloring (optional)

#### Directions:

Combine 1 1/2 cups of water, sugar, cloves and the hibiscus flowers in a medium saucepan, stirring frequently for 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow it to cool.

Strain the solids for a milder liqueur or leave them in for a stronger-flavored version.

Transfer to a clean, 1 Liter bottle or glass container, add the rums and add enough of the remaining water to reach the 1-liter mark.

Allow the blend to rest in a cool, dark place for 1 month, after which you may decant or filter into its final serving container.



### Did you know that cloves ...

Used often in Ayurvedic medicine, cloves are anti-fungal, antibacterial, antiseptic and analgesic. They're packed with antioxidants and are good sources of minerals (especially manganese), omega-3 fatty acids, fiber and vitamins. Here are a couple of uses for cloves, culled from an Ayurvedic tradition (from [MindBodyGree.com](http://MindBodyGree.com)):

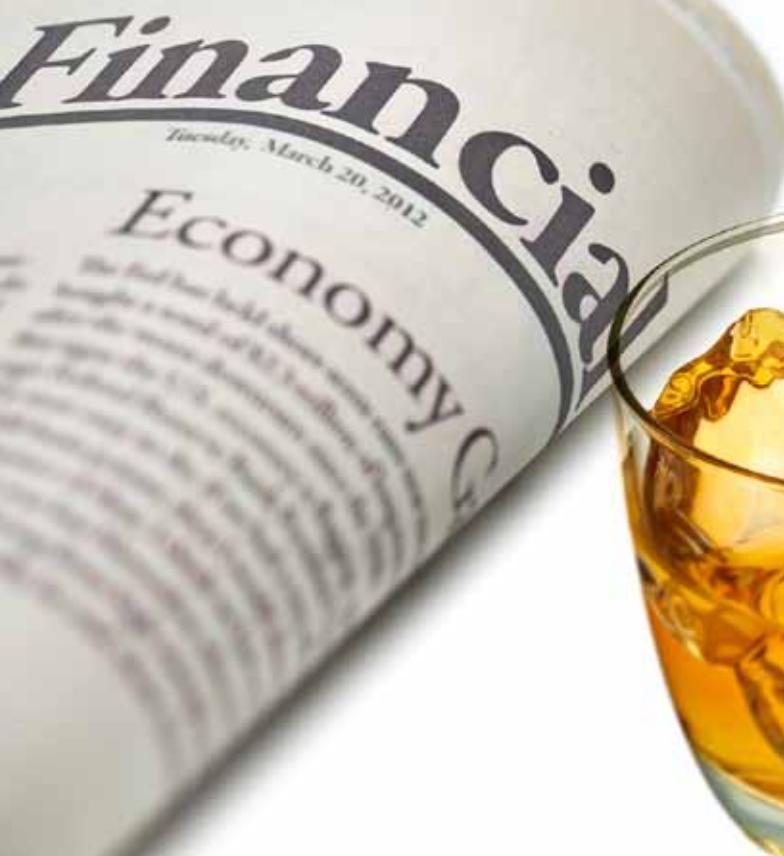
1. Temporarily treat a toothache. You can temporarily alleviate the pain by dabbing a little clove oil on a cotton ball and placing it on the sore tooth or on your gums. An added benefit is that it will also pull out any infection.
2. Relieve upper respiratory infections. Ayurveda suggests making a tea to lessen, or prevent, colds and flu. It is also used as an expectorant, making it easier to cough up phlegm. Cloves are a natural painkiller and also attack germs, so they'll help you get rid of that sore throat.
3. Reduce inflammation. Use clove oil to massage sore muscles; some also use it for arthritis and rheumatism.
4. Treat scrapes and bruises. Cloves are pretty strong and can sting, so the best bet is to probably make a poultice with a little olive oil.
5. Improve digestion. Cloves help relax the smooth lining of the GI tract, so they help alleviate vomiting, diarrhea, intestinal gas and stomach aches. Just be careful; since they're strong, they can also irritate the stomach.

# THE RUM<sup>®</sup> UNIVERSITY



# RUM IN THE NEWS

by Mike Kunetka



## PLANTERAY

Planteray Rum announced the release of Mister Fogg Navy Rum Sail N°2, a Navy-style rum crafted using the knowledge uncovered after five years of intensive research for The Rum Never Sets - 300 Years of Royal Navy & London Dock Rum, a groundbreaking book co-authored by spirits historian Matt Pietrek and Planteray Rum owner and Master Blender Alexandre Gabriel. At the heart of both the book and the rum are the Seven Pillars of Navy Rum, a framework developed by Gabriel to define the core techniques that gave Navy Rum its identity:

- Blending of Rums – Harmonizing multiple Caribbean origins
- Double Aging – Maturing in distinct environments for complexity
- Use of Used Barrels – Employing seasoned casks to enhance subtlety
- Dynamic Aging – Allowing the liquid to evolve in motion at sea
- Navy Active Vatting – Resting and marrying rums in large wooden vats
- Issuing Proof – Bottling at 55-57% ABV, in line with Navy standards



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).

- Burnt Sugar (Browning) – Coloring and balancing flavor with tradition

Mister Fogg Navy Rum Sail N°2 follows in the wake of Sail N°1, released in 2024, and deepens Planteray's exploration of authentic Navy Rum through historical techniques and creative aging. The rum is first aged in ex-bourbon barrels in the Caribbean, then shipped across the Atlantic for dynamic aging at sea, just as rations once traveled aboard Royal Navy vessels. Upon arrival in southwest France, the blend is matured further in seasoned oak barrels and large open wooden vats near the river L'Antenne, replicating the cool, humid conditions of the London docks where Navy Rum was once finished. The result is a rum with layered complexity, molasses, dark chocolate, vanilla, dried fruits, and warming spices, bottled at 55.7% ABV, the traditional "Navy proof." While there is no formal definition of navy rum, rum experts usually agree that it is a blend of aged rums from two or more countries. Crafted with meticulous care, Mister Fogg Navy Rum Sail N°2 is comprised of rums from Barbados, the birthplace of rum, Trinidad, Guyana, Mauritius and Jamaica.

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

#### **JOHNNY DEPP'S THREE HEARTS RUM**

On Dec. 22, Johnny Depp shared a TikTok post packed with pirate memorabilia, weathered trinkets, and familiar nautical flair. Overlaying the video was a simple line that instantly caught fans' attention: "As it happens... the rum is not gone!" For longtime Pirates of the Caribbean fans, the phrase was an unmistakable callback to Sparrow's iconic declaration that his rum stash had mysteriously vanished. But this time, the message came with a modern twist. The post wasn't just a nostalgic nod or alluding to another chapter in the Pirates saga. Instead, it served as an announcement for Depp's Three Hearts Rum, the premium spirits brand he co-founded. The first edition limited release is "rooted in loyalty and driven by purpose." The name three hearts is a nod to Depp's three hearts tattoo. Each heart symbolizes his family: Lily-Rose and Jack, whom he shares with ex, Vanessa Paradis. The website describes Johnny Depp's Three Hearts Rum as "Guided by his personal taste and creative vision. This first expression is a Caribbean rum, aged five years in ex-bourbon barrels with a hint of Oloroso, then re-casked for two additional years in ex-Cognac barrels, for a total of seven years. <https://www.threehearts.com/>

#### **CANDELA**

Candela Mamajuana, the botanical rum brand inspired by the legendary Dominican elixir, is relaunching with a bold new visual identity and expanded distribution. The rebrand marks a significant milestone for Candela, as it continues to elevate the Caribbean rum category with a modern, super-premium positioning. The new

packaging, developed in collaboration with Quaker City Mercantile, the award-winning design and branding agency behind some of the most iconic spirits in the world, features an elegant custom glass bottle, exotic typography, and refined accents that pay homage to Candela's Dominican roots while appealing to today's design-conscious consumer. "Quaker City Mercantile loved working on this project and are very proud of the final design. Alejandro allowed us to bring to life our proprietary process of Brand Mysticism in a very unique and alluring way. There is nothing else like this on shelves anywhere," said Steve Grasse, Founder of Quaker City Mercantile. "Our goal was to capture the soul of the Dominican Republic in a sophisticated presentation that stands proudly next to other iconic bottles," said Alejandro Russo, Founder and CEO of Candela. "Quaker City Mercantile helped us reimagine Candela with a timeless, elevated aesthetic that reflects the quality and craftsmanship of the liquid inside."

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

#### **IRON MAIDEN'S RUM OF THE ANCIENT MARINER**

After conquering the world with a wide range of Trooper beers and the wine Darkest Red, Iron Maiden is now taking a step into the world of exclusive distillates with The Rum of the Ancient Mariner. Inspired by the epic story of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", a cornerstone of heavy metal history from the band's iconic album Powerslave (1984), this rum celebrates timeless artistry and uncompromising craftsmanship. The label, created by the band's long-time collaborator Dan Mumford, is a visual journey filled with intricate details that reveal themselves the further you look, reflecting both the band's own lyrics and the inspiration of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's classic poem from 1798. This premium rum from the Caribbean is a carefully selected blend of rums from Jamaica and Barbados, aged in oak barrels according to the traditional Petites Eaux method to enhance flavor and character. The result is a soft and complex character of 40% vol., built up in layers like the finest musical compositions. Best enjoyed clean after dinner or slowly to appreciate the depth and nuances. "Iron Maiden is not just a band, they are a cultural phenomenon," says Sari H Wilholm at Live Brands Factory. "It is an honor to launch their first exclusive distillate and to have created this Premium Caribbean Dark Rum in close collaboration with them."

<https://www.facebook.com/bravewordsrecords>

#### **WEST INDIES RUM & SPIRITS PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION**

The West Indies Rum & Spirits Producers' Association (WIRSPA) Chair Clement Lawrence announced the publication of the Association's new Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)

Digest which is designed to showcase producer actions on responsible drinking, community support, sustainability initiatives, and governance. "This first publication demonstrates an impressive level of activity by producers heading into 2026. Telling these stories is vital, not only to highlight the work being done across our industry, but to reinforce our commitment to responsibility, community, and transparency." The announcement was made when the Board of Directors convened on Wednesday, December 3. This meeting brought together country directors and rum producers from all 15 member countries for a wide-ranging review of industry developments, market challenges, and shared priorities for the year ahead. Directors reflected on what has been a difficult trading year in the United States, where the combination of inflation, dampened consumer demand, and tariffs continue to put pressure on the spirits sector, including Caribbean rum. Feedback from producers noted that these challenges served to strengthen the resolve of the industry to develop other markets and to engage Caribbean governments in this diversification thrust. As the Caribbean moves toward the festive season, a period deeply rooted in family gatherings and community celebrations, Directors endorsed the need for strengthened messaging on moderation and responsible drinking. All brands in the grouping reported increased investment in responsible drinking communication for the holiday period. <https://www.wirspa.com/>

### **PUSSER's RUM**

Pusser's Rum, the original Royal Navy Rum, draws from its rich heritage with the launch of Night Watch, a blend of aged distillate from vintage wooden pot stills in Guyana and rum from Louisiana Blackstrap Molasses, considered to be the finest in the world. This spirited creation is reminiscent of the steadfast sailor keeping the midnight watch, evoking a sense of mystery, depth, and intensity with a bold, rich flavor not unlike the issue first served to Her Majesty's sailors and officers. Blackstrap Rum, like the black powder-stained sails of a ship after battle, became a symbol of resilience and strength in the early days of the Royal Navy. <https://pussersrum.com/>

### **THE HISTORY AND CONNOISSEURSHIP OF RUM**

Author Franklin Knight introduces the reader to the world of rum, from its origin and ancient history to its proliferation in the present. He writes about what makes rum unique and different from other spirits, with a detailed description of the various processes, fermentation and distillation, the basic chemistry of rum itself, the blending, and the physical process of harvesting, crushing, and extracting the sugary solution, which is the foundation of rum. In a virtual world, tour-taking in rum-producing countries as far-flung as Australia and India, but one that focuses on the Americas and the Caribbean, Professor

Knight guides the reader in a savoring of the best rums on the market, leaving the reader to become his own connoisseur. All the secrets to achieve this status are given step by step with recipes, the vast possible variations in cocktails, the vast spectrum of labels available today to a particular brand, and how to 'fit your palate' to a particular brand, down to employing the proper style of glass or snifter. And since fine rums may be found anywhere in the world, no specific brand of rum is ever recommended as the foremost label in its class. There is something here for everyone, from the rum fancier to those interested in the play of material culture in world and Caribbean history, particularly in the intimate coupling of the trade in enslaved Africans and sugar cane plantation growth, and rum production and distribution. Knight says "This book is not an endorsement of alcohol in general or of the drinking of rum. Nor is it designed to assist in the general marketing of rum." Franklin W. Knight is Leonard and Helen R. Stulman Professor Emeritus of History at Johns Hopkins University. He is a former president of the Latin American Studies Association, and former director of the Latin American Studies Program as well as former director of the Center of Africana Studies at Johns Hopkins. The hardback book measures 5 x 7 inches and has 314 pages. <https://ianrandlepublishers.com/product/the-history-and-connoisseurship-of-rum/>

### **JSR SPIRITS' R1768 RUMS**

JSR Spirits have announced the official Montserrat launch of its two premium rums, R1768 Rebel (Spiced Dark Rum) and R1768 Revolt (White Rum), set for St. Patrick's Festival Week 2026. This milestone follows two years of development, refinement, sensory testing, and international market preparation in collaboration with Murray & Yeatman Distilleries. JSR Spirits, co-founded by dynamic entrepreneurs James "Jamal" Simmonds, Axcel Simmonds and Jeevan Robinson, represents a bold and heartfelt endeavor to honor the spirit of Montserrat through the creation of premium rums. Crafted to honor Montserrat's heritage, while meeting global standards, R1768 rums were created with a clear mission: to produce a premium Caribbean rum that carries Montserrat's story to the world. From fermentation to finishing, the brand has focused on quality, authenticity, and professional brand execution to ensure international competitiveness. R1768 Rebel and R1768 Revolt have already begun turning heads across the UK, where they were soft-introduced at select rum festivals in 2024 and 2025. The early showcase was designed to expose consumers and retailers to a premium Montserrat-made product, one that stands shoulder-to-shoulder with global rum brands. <https://jsrspirits.com/>

### **RON del BARRILITO**

Puerto Rican producer Ron del Barrilito has announced the U.S. debut of Don Pedro Fernández

Selection III, a 31-year-old single-cask rum. The limited-edition expression, part of the brand's Autobiografía series, was aged in a single ex-Oloroso sherry cask and is limited to just 186 bottles. The rum comes from Cask #3057, which was laid down in the Hacienda Santa Ana warehouse in 1994. This release pays tribute to founder Don Pedro Fernández, who studied cognac-making in France before returning to Puerto Rico in 1871 and his practice of identifying and setting aside exceptional barrels for extended maturation.

Barrilito's Master Blender, Luis Planas, commented on the rum's development. "This rum is a reflection of the decades-long marriage between spirit, air, and ex-sherry cask. It delivers a naturally balanced yet complex masterpiece, a glimpse into the beauty and uniqueness of true single-cask aging." The brand highlighted the rarity of a cask surviving for more than three decades with both its quality and volume intact, noting that many barrels of this age are either lost to evaporation or become too concentrated for a single-cask bottling. Selection III marks the first time a rum from this series will be available in the U.S. market. The first two editions were sold exclusively at the Hacienda Santa Ana Visitor Center in Bayamón, Puerto Rico. Ron del Barrilito emphasizes its production process, which it states does not use a solera system or additives like sugar and caramel coloring.

<https://rondelbarrilito.com/>

### dictator rum

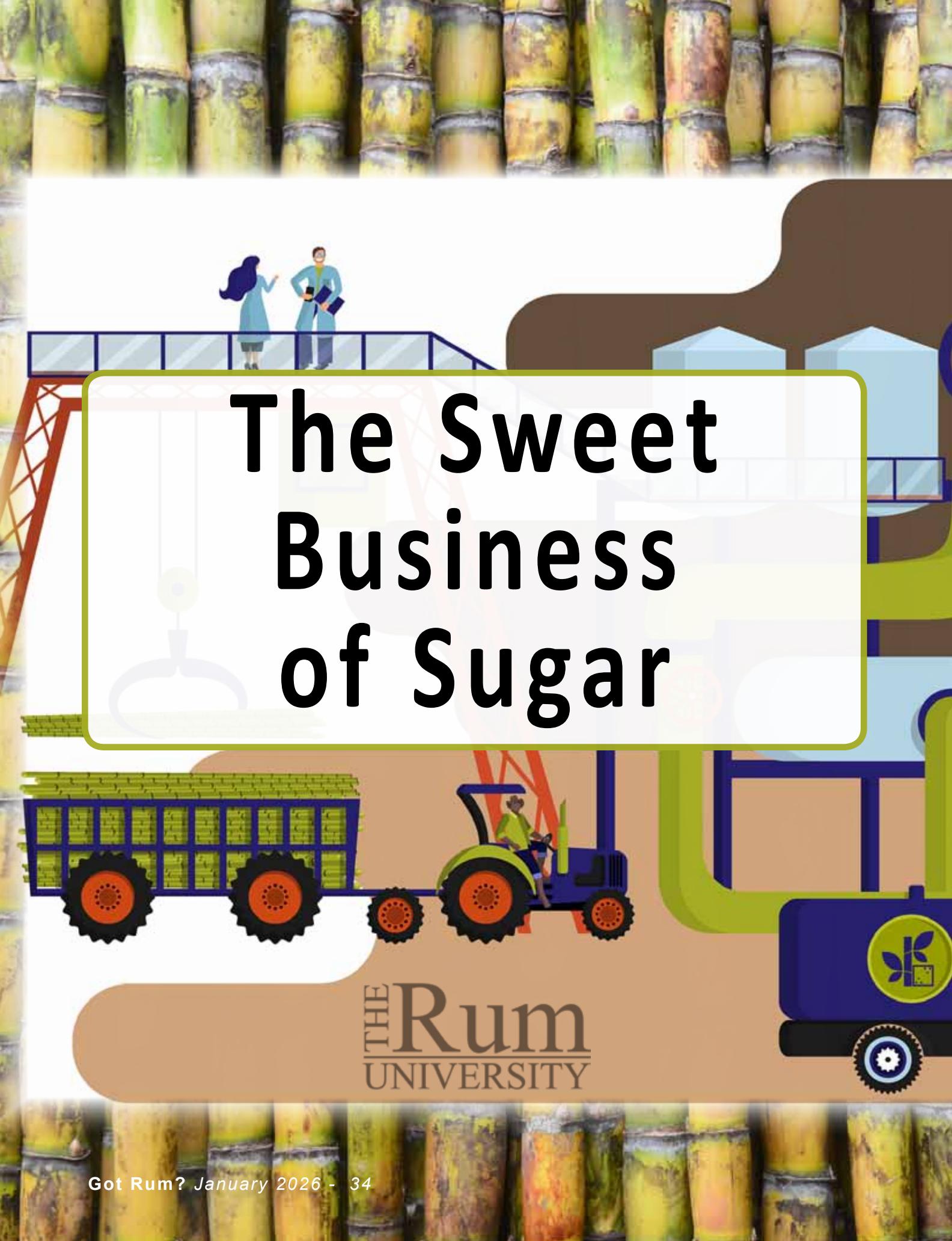
Academy Award winner Will Smith has spent four decades as a world-class entertainer, first an emcee, then a buzzy television and film star, before elevating his stardom as a businessman, producer and best-selling author. Smith raises the bar again as he now joins Dictador Rum as Global Creative Director. His first project will be the Game Changer Collection. After showing interest in being an integral part of Dictador, Smith was pitched the idea of a legacy rum by Polish entrepreneur Mariusz Jawoszek, who is CEO and owner of Dictador. "We see brand building in a different way. And I think this is the success of Dictador," says Jawoszek. "Everything I am doing with my team is just to enhance and show how good [the drink is], because the essence is in the bottle. The rest is just the energy, the creation, the collectability." The Game Changer, a Colombian rum enhanced with refined notes of caramel, dried citrus, honey and oak, has a smoothness that complements the collection's bottles, graffiti-designed Kong sculptures crafted by French artist Richard Orlinski. Although an homage to five decades of Orlinski figurines, the bottles also nod to Smith's beginnings on The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, his acting debut which established him as a household name. "In my generation, we grew up on Will's movies. He is an icon for my generation. He's an icon of film, an icon of music and art," Jawoszek explains. "So, it would be, of course, difficult to imagine a better personality to collaborate with,

to have in the company than Will Smith." Smith was shooting 2019 sci-fi action flick Gemini Man in Cartagena when he began drinking Dictador like the locals, although he admittedly wasn't a frequent rum drinker. But it was Jawoszek's brand and vision that had Smith sold on bringing his forte to the company. "What got me about Mariusz is the absolute commitment to art," Smith shares. "It is my belief and it is the devotion of my life that art will be a big part of bringing people together and elevating humanity through artistic exchange and interaction. When I thought about the idea of a Polish businessman with a Colombian rum family with an African-American Global Creative Director, It was exactly what I wanted to do with my life. Bringing people together globally in the spirit of artistic collaboration to be able to center meetings and events around global artistic collaboration, I was just on fire with that idea." <https://dictador.com/>

### worthy park visitors centre

The Jamaica Gleaner reports that the Worthy Park Visitors Centre continues to attract local and international visitors interested in Jamaica's rum-making heritage, with more than 10,000 people touring the facility over the past few years. Located at Worthy Park Estate, the visitors centre provides guided tours of Jamaica's only single estate distillery, where every stage of rum production from sugarcane cultivation to distillation and bottling takes place on one property. The estate is fully Jamaican-owned and operated. Worthy Park has been part of Jamaica's agricultural and industrial landscape since 1670, making it one of the island's oldest continuously operating estates. Historical records show that rum production at the estate dates back to 1741, giving it the oldest documented history among Jamaica's existing distilleries. Visitors begin the experience with an overview of the estate's history and sugarcane farming practices, including the production of sugar and molasses. The tour then moves to the distillery, where guests observe how sugarcane is transformed into rum using traditional methods, including the iconic double retort pot still. The tour concludes with a guided rum tasting, during which visitors sample selected expressions from the Worthy Park portfolio while learning about flavor profiles, production styles and the connection between the rum and the land on which it is produced. Worthy Park rums have received international recognition and awards, contributing to Jamaica's reputation in the global spirits' market. Tours are offered twice daily, at 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, from Tuesday to Saturday. The estate is located just over an hour's drive from Kingston and provides free parking, a bar area and a gift shop featuring merchandise and limited-release products available only on site. Advance booking is required.

<https://worthyparkestate.com/tour/>



# The Sweet Business of Sugar

THE RUM  
UNIVERSITY

# Australia

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 14, 2025

**Report Number:** AS2025-0008

**Report Name:** Sugar Annual

**Country:** Australia

**Post:** Canberra

**Report Category:** Sugar

**Prepared By:** Zeljko Biki

**Approved By:** Gerald Smith

**Report Highlights:**

Australia's sugar production is forecast to decline to 3.8 million metric tons (MMT) in marketing year (MY) 2025/26, down from an estimated 3.85 MMT in MY 2024/25, marking the lowest level of production in over a decade. Sugar cane production for MY 2025/26 is projected at 28.5 MMT, a one percent decrease from the previous year. The production decline is due to several factors, including wet harvest conditions during MY 2024/25 that delayed harvest completion, reducing the growth period for the MY 2025/26 crop. Wet conditions also limited replanting, and excessive rainfall and overcast conditions in northern growing areas hindered crop development. Raw sugar exports are forecast to rise to 3.1 MMT in MY 2025/26, up from an estimated 2.7 MMT in the prior year. Refined sugar exports are expected to remain stable at around 15,000 metric tons (MT). Domestic sugar consumption, currently at 20 percent of production, is forecast to increase due to strong population growth in Australia.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia's sugar production is forecast to decline to 3.8 million metric tons (MMT) in marketing year (MY) 2025/26, down from an estimated 3.85 MMT in MY 2024/25. This would mark the lowest level of production in over a decade. Sugar cane production for MY 2025/26 is projected at 28.5 MMT, representing a one percent decrease from the previous year and approximately 11 percent below the 10-year average.

Several factors contribute to the expected decline in sugar cane production. Wet harvesting conditions during MY 2024/25 not only slowed operations but also delayed the completion of the harvest, leaving less time for the MY 2025/26 crop to grow. Additionally, a significant volume of cane remained unharvested, reducing productivity in the affected areas for the upcoming season. In some key production regions, wet conditions also limited replanting, reducing the harvest area for MY 2025/26. Moreover, excessive rainfall in northern growing regions during the wet season (January to March 2025)—a critical period for crop development—restricted sunlight and impeded growth.

The rainfall forecast for the coming months is around average, which would support continued crop development and yields. More importantly, if these forecasts hold, fewer rain-induced disruptions are expected compared to recent years, potentially reducing adverse impacts on sugar cane production in the harvest year and the subsequent production season.

Domestic consumption of sugar is forecast to rise for MY 2025/26 due to strong population growth. Australia typically consumes around 20 percent of its sugar and relies heavily on the global export market.

Over 99 percent of Australia's total sugar exports are raw sugar, with the remainder refined sugar. Raw sugar exports are forecast to rise to 3.1 MMT in MY 2025/26, up from an estimated 2.7 MMT in the prior year. This notable increase, despite minimal differences in sugar cane and sugar production, is attributed to low trade volumes during the first eight months of MY 2024/25. The delayed and uncertain harvest made exporters cautious, limiting forward sales. Refined sugar exports are expected to remain stable at around 15,000 metric tons (MT).

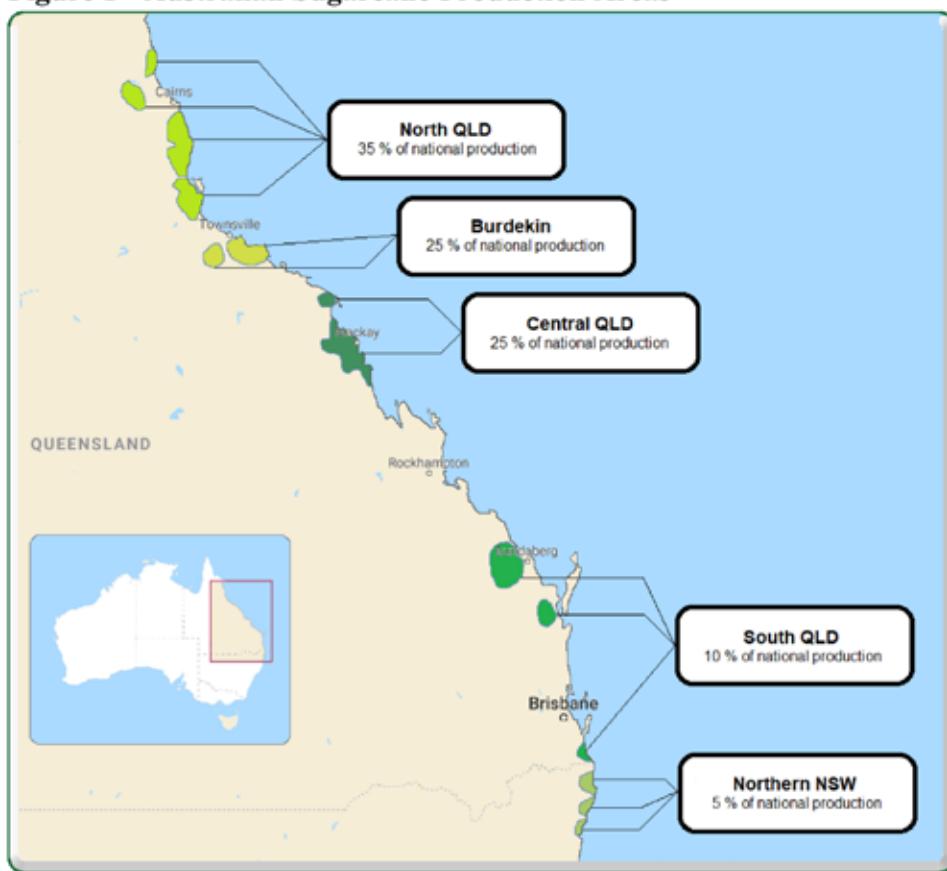
## SUGAR CANE

### Overview

Australian sugar cane is grown on coastal plains and valleys along a 2,100 km stretch of Australia's eastern coastline between Mossman in north Queensland (QLD) and Grafton in northern New South Wales (NSW). North QLD has a tropical climate with average rainfall as high as 3,500mm (138 inches) per annum, transitioning to the sub-tropical climate in northern NSW with average rainfall of approximately 1,500mm (59 inches). Figure 1 shows the main growing regions, and their general characteristics are:

North Queensland	35 percent of the national production. Tropical climate with rainfall of up to 3,500mm (138 inches) annually. Production is more likely to be impacted by excessive rain rather than drought.
Burdekin	25 percent of the national production. Tropical climate with rainfall of less than 1,000mm (39 inches) annually. Highly reliant on irrigation. Highest yielding region.
Central Queensland	25 percent of the national production. Tropical climate with rainfall of approximately 1,500mm (59 inches) annually. Some areas achieve good yields without irrigation, while others use partial irrigation after harvest in the lead-up to wet season rainfalls.
South Queensland	10 percent of the national production. Sub-tropical climate with an average rainfall of approximately 1,100mm (43 inches) annually. Dependent on irrigation water availability.
Northern NSW	Five percent of the national production. Sub-tropical climate with an average rainfall of approximately 1,500mm (59 inches) annually. Lower average temperatures and humidity create slower-growing conditions. Crop-growing cycles range from 12 to 24 months depending on prevailing conditions.

**Figure 1 - Australian Sugarcane Production Areas**



Source: FAS/Canberra

The major sugar cane-producing areas are in tropical regions. They depend on high rainfalls and humid sunny conditions during the wet season, typically from January to March. A positive wet season not only assists the production of the current crop in the lead-up to harvest but also sets up a high soil moisture profile for the successful planting of fallow and replant areas, which in the tropical northern areas typically occurs between April and July. It also assists the regrowth of the early harvested sugar cane crop. Well-timed smaller follow-up rainfall after the wet season is also important for final sugar cane production outcomes.

Australia has approximately 3,044 sugar cane growers (ABARES – Farm Survey Analysis 2021) in a deregulated market. With typically 75 to 80 percent of production exported, the domestic sugar price is directly influenced by the world market price - the benchmark is the 'Sugar #11 Futures'. Growers have three-year sugar cane supply agreements with the sugar mill in their area. Although the government deregulated the in 2006, the sugar mills continued a single-desk marketing arrangement through Queensland Sugar Limited (QSL). In 2013, however, the millers stopped this single-desk marketing arrangement and provided the required three years' notice to end it. Since 2017, growers can choose whether the rights to sell their sugar go to their local sugar supply mill or QSL. The current structure

also enables other third-party marketers to offer their services. Sugar cane growers can also forward lock sugar prices on a portion of their annual production, typically for up to three years. This assists in mitigating fluctuations in sugar prices from year to year. The industry grower representative body, "Canegrowers", has rolled out a 'Pricing Essentials' education program for their members to support growers in actively managing their price risk.

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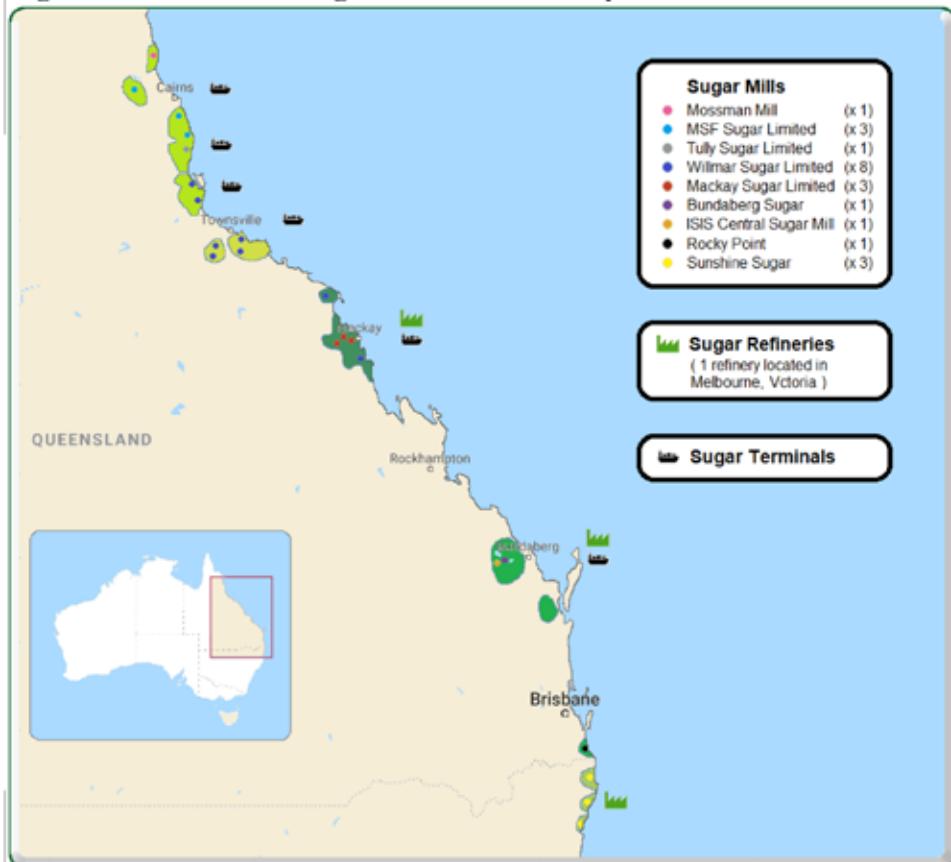
Sugar cane is a perennial tropical C4 plant originating from New Guinea. The crop germinates from billets (approximately a 30cm portion of a sugar cane stalk) planted in rows into a soil bed. The soil beds are raised to minimize waterlogging, particularly during the high rainfall wet season periods. After germination, plants will typically tiller and form 4-12 stems. The typical growing period between harvest is 12 months. However, in northern New South Wales, the growing period is from 12 to 24 months and varies according to prevailing climatic conditions. At harvest, the entire plant is cut just above ground level, and the stalks are cut to approximately 30cm in length by machinery. The stalks are transported from the paddock by haulout wagons or trucks before being transported to the processing mill via small gauge rail or road transport. After farmers harvest the first planted sugar cane, the subsequent regrowth from the stubble is known as ratoons. After the first harvest, annual production typically declines each successive year, and farmers typically allow three to four ratoons. Farms normally have approximately 15 percent of their total sugar cane farming area as fallow each season, planted from April to June in tropical regions. A further portion of the crop, typically 5-10 percent, is replanted (i.e., no fallow period) shortly after the final ratoon is harvested. This approach achieves a relatively even age profile of sugarcane plants across each farm and assists in optimizing production and achieving a relatively stable production from year to year. The typical fallow and replant program and timing differs in the sub-tropical region of northern New South Wales from that of tropical regions.

There are 22 sugar mills (see Figure 2) processing sugar cane, typically from June to late November. Nine entities, from publicly listed companies to publicly unlisted companies; one private company and one cooperative are the mills' owners. The mills process sugar cane within 24 hours of harvest, producing raw sugar and by-products such as molasses, bagasse, ash, and mill mud. Molasses is generally used in the animal feed industry, and one of the Wilmar mills in central Queensland also produces ethanol from molasses. Meanwhile, multiple mills have cogeneration plants using bagasse to produce electricity for their needs, with any surplus power supplied to the local electricity grid. Ash and mill mud are used as fertilizer by sugar cane producers.

Approximately 75 to 80 percent of raw sugar production is delivered and stored at one of six ports on the Queensland coast for subsequent export. A small amount of raw sugar is domestically refined for consumption in Australia, and a relatively small volume of refined sugar is exported. There are a total of four sugar refineries owned by three entities. Three refineries are in the growing regions (see Figure 2), and one is in Melbourne, Victoria. There are six ports where sugar is stored and loaded onto ships for export. These port facilities are all owned by Sugar Terminal Limited (STL), and the major shareholder

is QSL. QSL currently manages the terminals, but STL recently announced that they will take over management moving forward and the transition is expected to be completed by June 30, 2026.

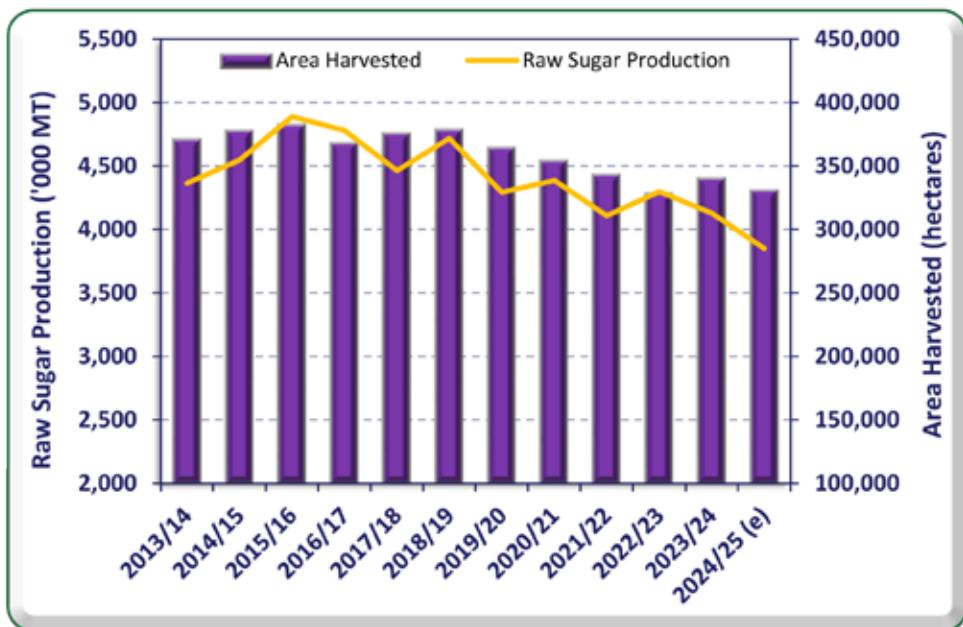
**Figure 2 – Australian Sugar Mill and Refinery and Port Terminal Locations**



Source: FAS/Canberra using data from Australian Sugar Milling Council

Despite the significant variations in rainfall from year to year, the risk of cyclone damage experienced in Australia, and extensive world sugar price fluctuations, sugar cane and raw sugar production does not typically vary greatly from year to year. Over the last 10-year period, raw sugar production has varied from 4.11 MMT to 4.89 MMT (see Figure 3), a variation of around  $\pm$  8 percent. However, the estimate for the last season shows a substantial fall from past results (see Figure 3). This is associated with the previous two seasons being impacted by wet conditions at harvest, which resulted in substantial sugar cane remaining unharvested and carried over to the next season. This has impacted productivity and the overall sugar content.

**Figure 3 – Australian Sugar Cane Area and Raw Sugar Production History**



Source: Australian Sugar Manufacturers (ASM)

Note: (e) ASM Provisional results

There are a series of key factors that influence overall production:

- 1) Dry conditions around the time of planting can lead to a failed crop establishment, negatively impacting the harvested area.
- 2) The impacts of cyclones, which occur from time to time, mainly in tropical regions, can significantly affect yields. Crops may take 2-3 seasons to fully recover.
- 3) Wet weather during harvest can lead to some areas of sugar cane remaining unharvested and carried over to the following year. It's crucial to manage this situation as these carry-over crops can have high yields but usually have low sugar content and are far from optimal.
- 4) Significant mill breakdowns during the crush can extend the harvest period by weeks and may increase overall yield in that season. Still, they will have a negative impact on the following season as the late-harvested crop has a shorter growing period.
- 5) Grower sentiment associated with large variations in sugar prices influences not only planted area but also the level of crop inputs, such as fertilizer, which influence yields.

However, the nature of the sugar cane plant with a 12-month growing cycle along with the crop's typical three to four ratoons has a strong stabilizing influence over the crop and subsequent raw sugar production from year to year.

## Production

FAS/Canberra forecasts sugar cane production for marketing year (MY) 2025/26 at 28.5 million metric tons (MMT)—a modest 1 percent decline from the revised MY 2024/25 estimate of 28.8 MMT. This marks the first time in over a decade that production has fallen below 30 MMT, 10.8 percent below the 10-year average of 32.0 MMT.

The below-average forecast is attributed to several key factors:

- A large area of unharvested sugar cane carried over from the previous season.
- Reduced replanting in northern growing regions due to excessive rainfall and flooding.
- Overcast weather conditions in the north hindered crop growth.

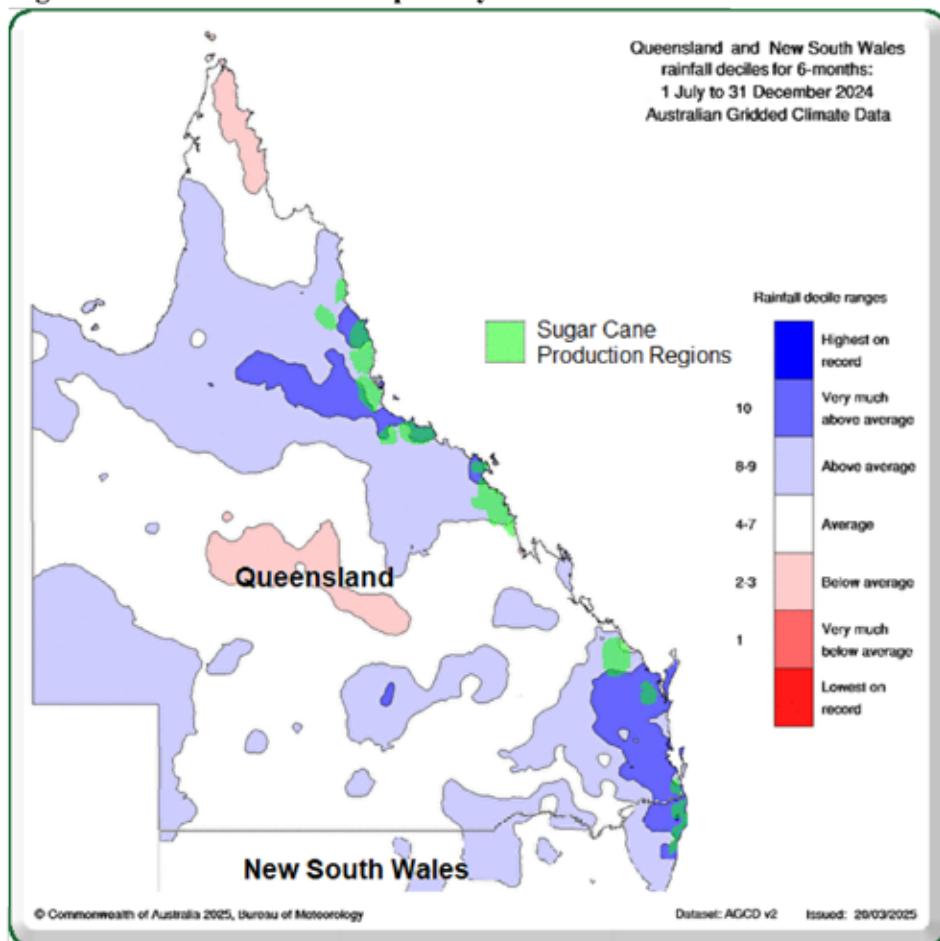
### Impact of Unharvested Sugar Cane

According to weekly harvest reports from Australian Sugar Manufacturers, approximately 800,000 MT of sugar cane—2.7 percent of the estimated MY 2024/25 crop—was left unharvested. Industry sources indicate that this "stand-over" cane is generally in good condition and may have minimal direct negative impact on forecast production.

However, several indirect effects are likely to reduce output for MY 2025/26:

- 1) Some of the stand-over area had reached the end of its productive cycle and was due for replanting.
- 2) The MY 2024/25 harvest extended into mid-January, two months later than the optimal timeline. This shortened the growing window for the MY 2025/26 crop, limiting its development potential.
  - The delays were mainly due to above-average rainfall during the harvest period (see Figure 4).
  - Frequent weather-related stoppages and increased mill breakdowns—especially in Central Queensland—exacerbated the issue.

Figure 4 – Rainfall Decile Map - July to Dec 2024



Source: Australian Bureau of Meteorology / FAS/Canberra

### Reduced Planting

Sugar cane replanting typically occurs between April and July, depending on weather and soil conditions. Industry sources report that the Burdekin region, which usually plants toward the end of this window, was severely affected by excessive rainfall in June 2024. This resulted in a significantly reduced replanting area.

Early indicators suggest that Burdekin's sugar cane production for MY 2025/26 could fall over 10 percent below average, due to the diminished harvest area.

### Excessive Rain and Flooding

The Burdekin and North Queensland regions experienced heavy rainfall during the wet season, which is expected to negatively affect MY 2025/26 production.

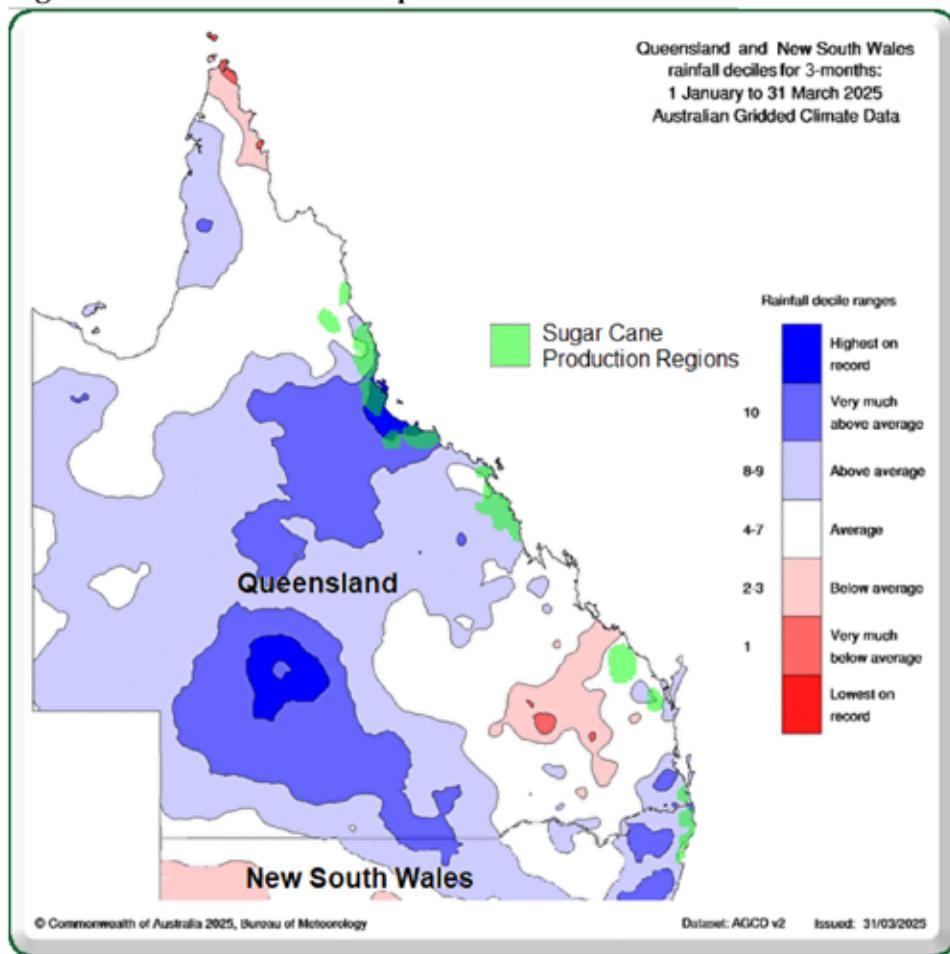
From July to December 2024, rainfall across key production areas was above to well above average (see Figure 4), coinciding with the MY 2024/25 harvest period. While rain during this time can benefit growth in harvested areas, it also disrupts harvesting operations, delaying completion and impacting the following season.

During the wet season (January to March 2025), excessive rainfall posed even greater challenges:

- Soil waterlogging hindered crop development.
- Limited fertilizer applications.
- Compromised weed and pest control efforts.

Additionally, persistent overcast conditions limited sunlight, impeding crop growth in key northern regions (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5 – Rainfall Decile Map - Jan to Mar 2025**



Source: Australian Bureau of Meteorology / FAS/Canberra

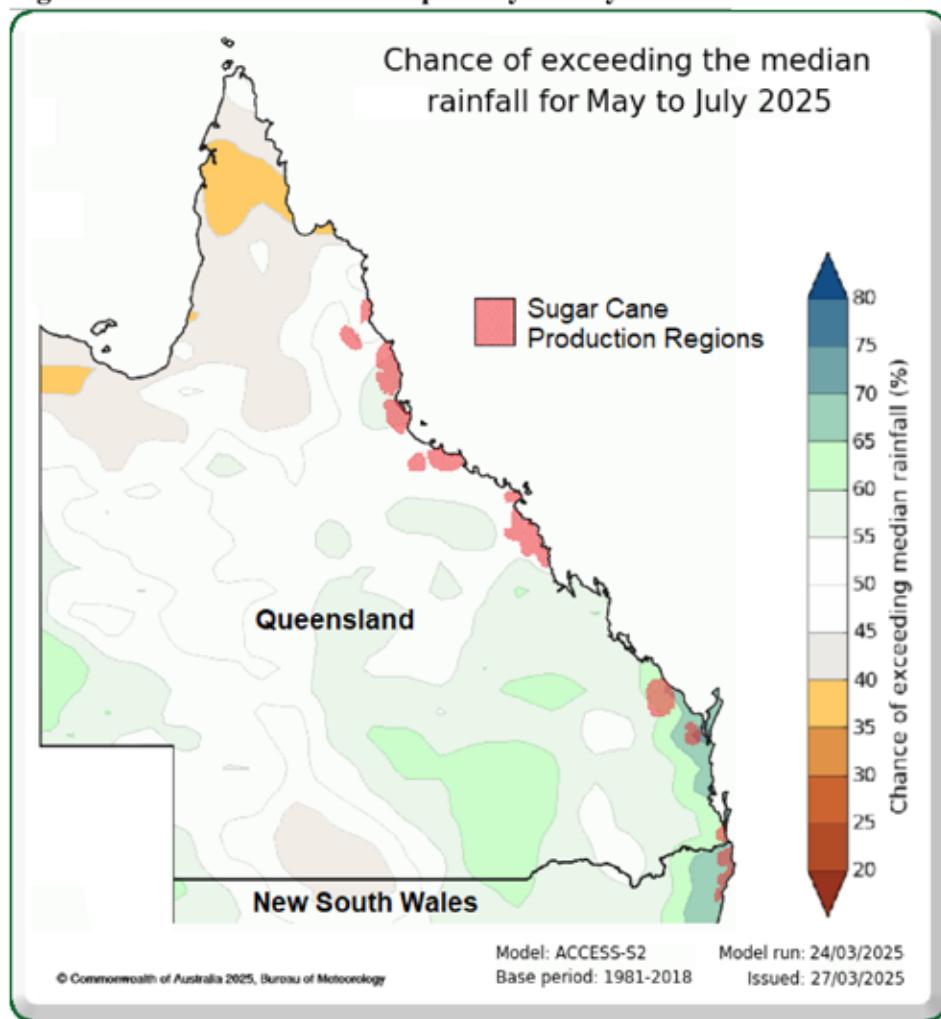
North Queensland, which typically receives high rainfall, achieves its best yields in years with below-average rainfall years. The 2025 wet season's heavy rains are expected to substantially reduce yields in this region.

### Short-Term Weather Outlook

As of early April 2025, crops are nearing the start of the harvest, which begins in late May. Moderate rainfall following the wet season and early harvest can support higher yields.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology forecasts average chances of exceeding median rainfall in the coming months across major sugar-producing regions (see Figure 6). If realized, this would support a slight improvement in yields and, crucially, may result in fewer rain-induced disruptions in early harvest operations—unlike recent years.

**Figure 6 - Rainfall Forecast Map - May to July 2025**

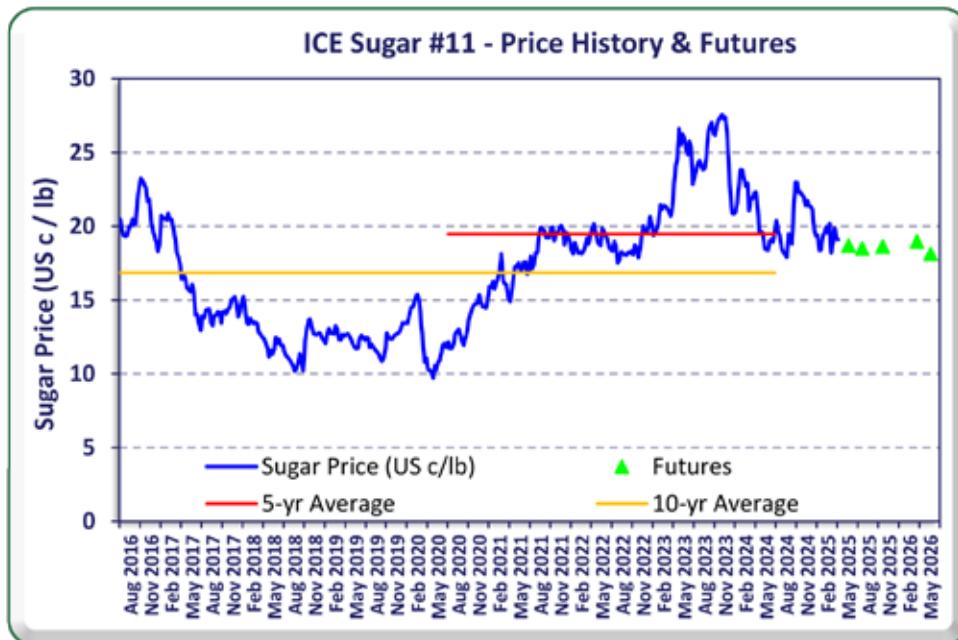


Source: Australian Bureau of Meteorology / FAS/Canberra

## Market Conditions and Currency Impact

A positive sign for the sugar industry is that global sugar prices remain firm, with MY 2025/26 futures trading around 18 to 19 US cents per pound—approximately 10 percent above the 10-year average (see Figure 7). These levels would encourage growers to optimize their sugar cane production.

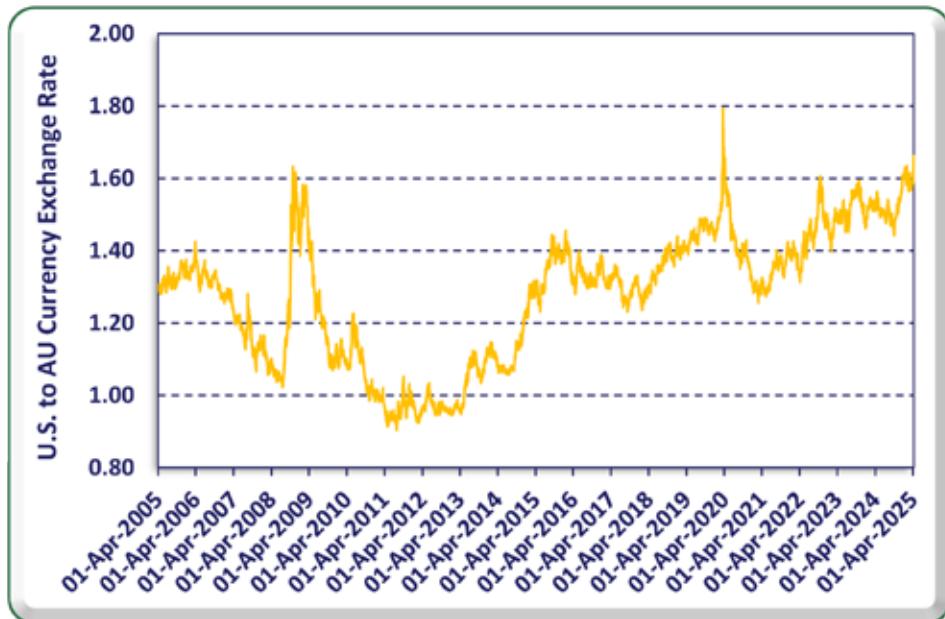
Figure 7 – ICE Sugar #11 – Historical and Futures Price Trends



In addition, the Australian dollar weakened further in early April 2025 to AU\$1.66 per US\$1, its lowest level in over 20 years—except for a brief period in March 2020 (see Figure 8). A weaker currency boosts the global competitiveness of Australian sugar exports and improves returns for growers.

While economic forecasts suggest a gradual strengthening of the Australian dollar throughout 2025, even a partial recovery is expected to preserve a degree of price competitiveness for exporters.

Figure 8 – US:AU Currency Exchange Rate – 2005 to Mar 2025



Source: Reserve Bank of Australia

#### MY 2024/25 Production Estimate

FAS/Canberra has revised the MY 2024/25 sugar cane production estimate downward to 28.8 MMT, compared to the forecast from six months earlier of 29.5 MMT. This revision is based on Australian Sugar Manufacturers' (ASM) final harvest data.

While the ASM progressively adjusted final production estimate was 29.6 MMT, the amount harvested was lower due to the 800,000 MT left unharvested—an amount now carried forward into the MY 2025/26 forecast.

#### SUGAR

#### Production

FAS/Canberra forecasts Australia's sugar production for MY 2025/26 at 3.8 MMT, representing a 1.3 percent decline from the MY 2024/25 estimate of 3.85 MMT. This decrease is mainly due to the expected reduction in sugar cane production. The forecast and the estimate for the current year mark the lowest sugar production levels since MY 2011/12.

The sugar content of the crop—measured by commercial cane sugar (CCS)—for MY 2025/26 is expected to remain in line with the prior year and the 10-year average. This outlook is based on the expectation of typical weather conditions during harvest, allowing for a timely completion—a contrast

to the delayed harvest in MY 2024/25. Earlier harvesting enables more of the crop to be processed before the sugar content begins to deteriorate.

Although this positive situation exists, the MY 2025/26 crop will have a shorter growing period, which could limit crop maturity at harvest and potentially reduce sugar content. Overall, these factors are expected to balance out, resulting in average sugar content levels consistent with historical trends.

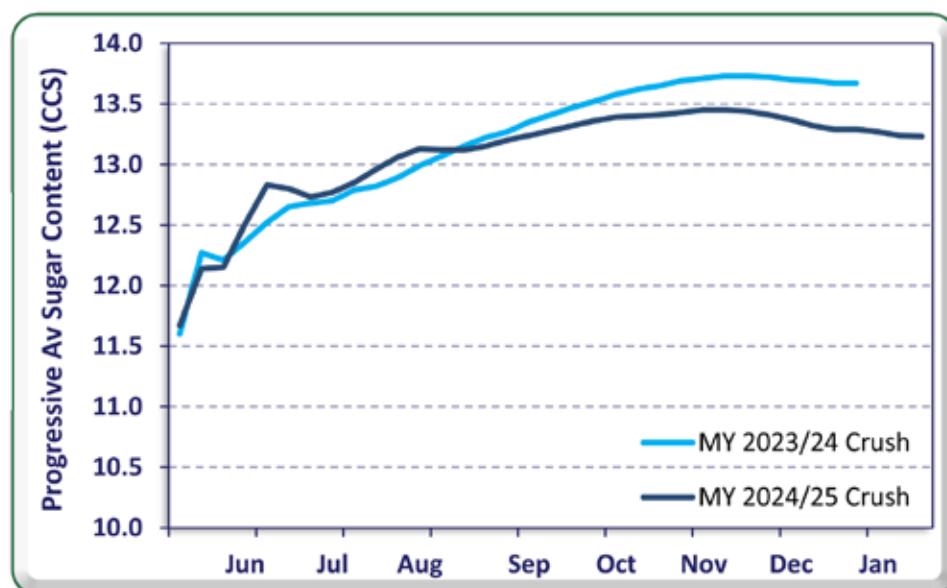
As in recent years, abnormal weather during harvest and major mill breakdowns remain key risks. These disruptions can negatively impact the harvest timeline and reduce the final sugar content of the crop.

### MY 2024/25 Production Estimate

The FAS/Canberra sugar production estimate of 3.85 MMT for MY 2024/25 is 150,000 MT (3.8 percent) lower than the estimate from six months prior. The revision is mainly due to a smaller-than-expected harvest, with approximately 800,000 MT of sugar cane left unharvested. This shortfall was due to unusually high rainfall during the harvest and frequent mill breakdowns.

In addition, the very late finish to the MY 2024/25 harvest had a detrimental effect on sugar content. Early in the harvest, the cumulative CCS was tracking well—comparable to the previous above-average year. However, starting in mid-August, multiple weather-related delays and mill stoppages slowed harvesting progress. As the harvest extended well beyond the preferred mid-November finish, the sugar content of the remaining crop was substantially reduced, ultimately dragging down the overall average CCS for the season (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9 – Sugar Cane Harvest, Progressive CCS – MY 2023/24 to MY 2024/25**



Source: Australian Sugar Manufacturers

Note: CCS is a measure of sugar content in sugar cane

## Consumption

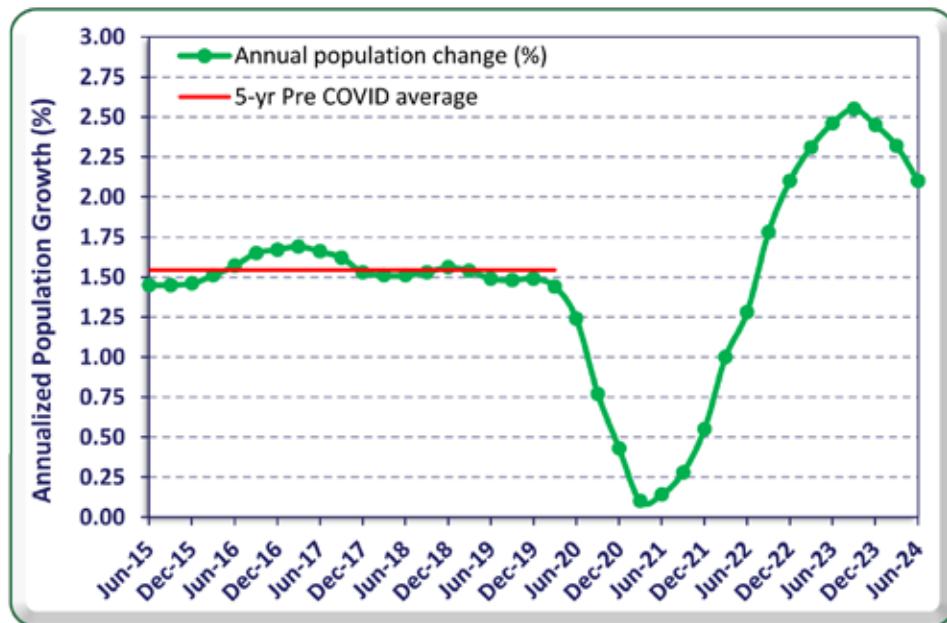
Domestic sugar consumption is forecast to rise to 940,000 MT in MY 2025/26, up from the MY 2024/25 estimate of 920,000 MT. This increase is primarily driven by strong population growth.

Australia's population growth rate has significantly exceeded its pre-COVID-19 average of just over 1.5 percent per annum. Since late 2022, the rate has consistently remained above this long-term trend, peaking at 2.6 percent, before easing to an annualized rate of 1.8 percent in the third quarter of 2024 (see Figure 10). The bulk of this growth has been fueled by high levels of immigration, although the federal government has since introduced measures to moderate the inflow.

Despite these policy changes, strong population growth is expected to continue well into 2025, underpinning the projected increase in domestic sugar consumption for MY 2025/26.

The MY 2024/25 sugar consumption estimate of 920,000 MT represents a 20,000 MT increase from MY 2023/24, reflecting the impact of population growth on sugar demand during that period.

**Figure 10 – Australian Population Growth Trend**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

**Trade**  
**Exports**

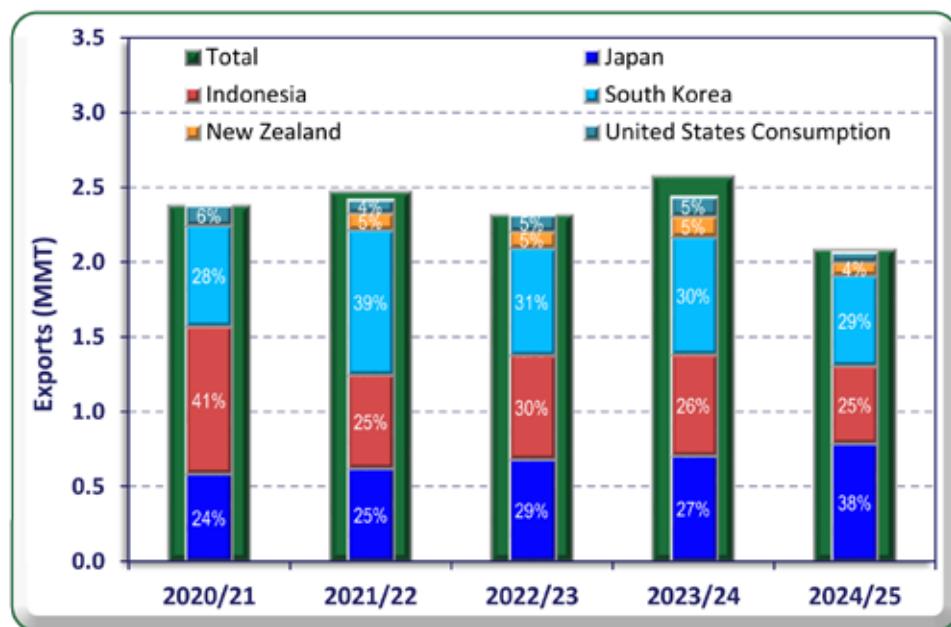
### MY 2025/26 Raw Sugar Export Forecast

Raw sugar exports for MY 2025/26 are forecast to increase to 3.1 MMT, up from an estimated 2.7 MMT in MY 2024/25. This significant increase reflects a larger-than-expected drop in exports during the estimate year rather than a notable change in sugar production.

Approximately 80 percent of Australia's sugar production is exported, with raw sugar accounting for over 99 percent of these exports. The remaining fraction is refined sugar. Due to relatively high production costs, Australia has reduced its refined sugar exports over the past decade—from around 200,000 MT to just 20,000 MT. There are no expectations of a significant rebound in refined sugar exports in the near future.

In recent years, the primary importers of Australian raw sugar have consistently been Japan, Indonesia, and South Korea, which together account for 85 to 95 percent of total exports (see Figure 11). New Zealand and the United States make up most of the remaining share. In the past, Australia has exported well over 4 MMT of raw sugar, and with firm demand and favorable prices, markets are readily available for the forecast of 3.1 MMT.

**Figure 11 – Major Importers of Australian Raw Sugar (July to February)**



Source: *Trade Data Monitor (data as reported by importing countries)*

## MY 2024/25 Raw Sugar Export Estimate

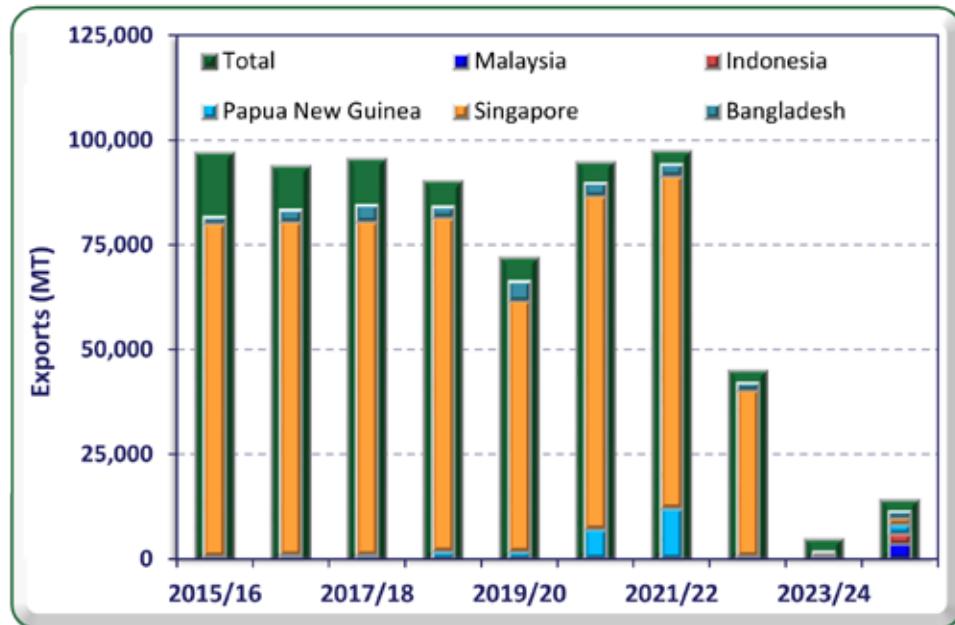
FAS Canberra has revised down its MY 2024/25 raw sugar export estimate to 2.7 MMT, compared to the previous forecast (six months earlier) of 3.25 MMT. Other nations' imports of Australian raw sugar in the marketing year-to-date (July 2024 to February 2025) reached almost 2.1 MMT. Based on seasonal trade patterns, the revised estimate of 2.7 MMT is considered achievable. While the complete reason for the shortfall is unclear, a slow and delayed harvest, along with concerns over unharvested volumes, likely caused exporters to act cautiously and avoid overcommitting to forward contracts.

## MY 2025/26 Refined Sugar Export Forecast

FAS/Canberra forecasts refined sugar exports at 15,000 MT for MY 2025/26, similar to the 17,000 MT estimated for MY 2024/25. Export volumes in the first eight months of MY 2024/25 reached 14,000 MT. For the decade prior to MY 2023/24, Australia consistently exported between 100,000 MT and 200,000 MT of refined sugar annually, predominantly to a single market—Singapore.

Until 2023, Singapore was Australia's primary destination for refined sugar. Since then, it has diversified its supply sources, reducing imports from Australia. Malaysia, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea have increased their demand for Australian refined sugar over the past year (see Figure 12), but overall volumes remain modest. Given Australia's high production costs relative to key competitors, a significant resurgence in refined sugar exports appears unlikely in the short to medium term.

**Figure 12 – Major Export Destinations of Australian Refined Sugar (July to February)**



Source: *Trade Data Monitor*

## Implications of U.S. Tariff Changes on Trade

Following recent changes to U.S. import tariffs announced on April 2, 2025, minimal disruption to Australia's raw sugar exports is expected.

The U.S. implemented a baseline import tariff of 10 percent and imposed higher reciprocal tariffs on 57 countries. The baseline tariff took effect on April 5, while the reciprocal tariffs were set to begin on April 9. However, on that same day, the implementation of the reciprocal tariffs was paused for 90 days, and their rates were reduced to the baseline rate of 10 percent during this period.

The U.S. operates a tariff rate quota (TRQ) system, allocating quotas to over 40 countries for sugar imports. The Dominican Republic, Brazil, and the Philippines hold the largest shares, while Australia also has a meaningful quota. Imports within TRQ volumes face low or zero tariffs, while volumes exceeding quotas are subject to high tariffs, generally making them economically unviable.

Sugar from Australia, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic is now subject to the 10 percent baseline tariff on TRQ volumes, with an additional 10 percent tariff on any volumes above quota. Although the Philippines faces a higher rate of 18 percent, their sugar exports to the U.S. have been minimal in recent years. The key TRQ-exporting countries are all treated similarly under the new tariff structure.

Additionally, Brazil's sugar export to the U.S. is small relative to their overall exports, meaning the additional tariff is unlikely to significantly influence their balance of sugar and ethanol production.

FAS/Canberra, therefore, anticipates minimal impact on the global sugar trade resulting from these U.S. tariff adjustments. This outlook is further supported by steady sugar futures prices over the next 12 months (see Figure 7).

### Imports

Australia's refined sugar imports remain minimal, accounting for just over one percent of total domestic consumption. FAS/Canberra forecasts refined sugar imports to remain steady at 10,000 MT in MY 2025/26, unchanged from the estimate for MY 2024/25.

### Stocks

End-of-year sugar stocks in Australia are typically very low, reflecting the close alignment between the harvest season and the marketing year. However, stocks for MY 2024/25 are expected to be elevated due to the slow and extended harvest, which created uncertainty for exporters and delayed shipments. In contrast, for MY 2025/26, stocks are projected to return to typical low levels.

This pattern is largely driven by timing: the sugar cane harvest begins in late May, just before the marketing year begins in July. Sugar exports ramp up in July, roughly one month after the harvest

begins, and remain high through December, which follows the typical end of harvest in November. From January to June, exports decline as this period is primarily used to draw down remaining stocks in preparation for the start of the next harvest cycle.

**Table 1 - Production, Supply, and Distribution of Sugar Cane**

Sugar Cane for Centrifugal Market Year Begins	2023/2024		2024/2025		2025/2026	
	Jul 2023		Jul 2024		Jul 2025	
	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post
<b>Area Planted</b> (1000 HA)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Area Harvested</b> (1000 HA)	330	330	335	335	0	0
<b>Production</b> (1000 MT)	29800	29800	29500	28800	0	28500
<b>Total Supply</b> (1000 MT)	29800	29800	29500	28800	0	28500
<b>Utilization for Sugar</b> (1000 MT)	29800	29800	29500	28800	0	28500
<b>Utilizatn for Alcohol</b> (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Utilization</b> (1000 MT)	29800	29800	29500	28800	0	28500
(1000 HA),(1000 MT)						

OFFICIAL DATA CAN BE ACCESSED AT: [PSD Online Advanced Query](#)

**Table 2 - Production, Supply, and Distribution of Centrifugal Sugar**

Sugar, Centrifugal Market Year Begins	2023/2024		2024/2025		2025/2026	
	Jul 2023		Jul 2024		Jul 2025	
	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post
<b>Beginning Stocks</b> (1000 MT)	784	784	848	853	0	1079
<b>Beet Sugar Production</b> (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Cane Sugar Production</b> (1000 MT)	4100	4100	4000	3850	0	3800
<b>Total Sugar Production</b> (1000 MT)	4100	4100	4000	3850	0	3800
<b>Raw Imports</b> (1000 MT)	3	3	2	3	0	3
<b>Refined Imp.(Raw Val)</b> (1000 MT)	13	13	10	10	0	10
<b>Total Imports</b> (1000 MT)	16	16	12	13	0	13
<b>Total Supply</b> (1000 MT)	4900	4900	4860	4716	0	4892
<b>Raw Exports</b> (1000 MT)	3140	3140	3250	2700	0	3100
<b>Refined Exp.(Raw Val)</b> (1000 MT)	12	7	10	17	0	15
<b>Total Exports</b> (1000 MT)	3152	3147	3260	2717	0	3115
<b>Human Dom. Consumption</b> (1000 MT)	900	900	920	920	0	940
<b>Other Disappearance</b> (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Use</b> (1000 MT)	900	900	920	920	0	940
<b>Ending Stocks</b> (1000 MT)	848	853	680	1079	0	837
<b>Total Distribution</b> (1000 MT)	4900	4900	4860	4716	0	4892
(1000 MT)						

OFFICIAL DATA CAN BE ACCESSED AT: [PSD Online Advanced Query](#)



### Offering Bottling/Co-Packing Services

Rum Central is located within the **Texas Triangle**, a region in Texas formed by the state's four main metropolitan areas.

The **Texas Triangle** is one of eleven mega regions in the United States and is home to approximately 75% of the State's population. This area also benefits substantially from trade with Mexico, the United States' third largest trade partner.

Rum Central is 30 Miles from Austin, with convenient access to interstate highways, rail lines, airports and seaports (within 250 miles of 4 of the top 10 U.S. seaports), guaranteeing fast and efficient shipping of your dry and finished goods.

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Present

# THE HISTORY AND SCIENCE OF THE BARREL

In the world of distilled spirits, nothing evokes elegance, sophistication and transformation more than barrel aging. The right barrels, in the right hands, can transform the mundane into the spectacular. Whether it is American, French, Colombian, Bulgarian or other oak variety, a well-made barrel is the magic chamber within which time slowly transforms the contents.

Join us as we explore the world of barrels. We'll take a deep dive into the physical and chemical transformations that take place inside the world's preferred aging vessels.



# THE HISTORY AND SCIENCE OF THE BARREL

## Lesson 1: The Art of Cooperage

Welcome to The Rum University's newest course! Over the course of this year we will bring you 12 informative lessons about the history and importance of oak barrels. You can find additional courses and material on the university's website at [www.RumUniversity.com](http://www.RumUniversity.com).

**“Cooper, noun, one who makes or repairs wooden casks, barrels or tubs”**

Coopers as professional craftsmen date back to the origin of the wooden casks themselves. Historians disagree on when and where wooden barrels were first used, what they do agree on is that the Romans took full advantage of barrels for storing and transporting goods. The biggest challenge to researching wooden artifacts is that they deteriorate much faster than their metal or ceramic counterparts, thus the evidence of their existence easily vanishes.



Early Greek and Roman writers credit the Gauls with the development of barrels. For example, Roman author and naturalist Gaius Plinius Secundus (also known as *Pliny the Elder*), who died in 79 AD, wrote that the Gauls stored their wine in “wooden containers that were held together with metal hoops.” A couple of decades before then, Julius Caesar invaded Gaul at Uxellodenum, the Roman army faced an enemy armed with wooden barrels filled with pitch and grease -a primitive incendiary bomb- which were lit and rolled down the hills toward the invading soldiers. These wooden barrels were called “cupae,” from where we derive the word “cooper.”

Regardless of the origin of their profession or the root of its name, coopers are responsible for building the foundation upon which aged wines and spirits around the world are forged. Today some companies are adding saw dust, wood chips and other by-products to their beverages in order to impart rich wood flavors without having to actually age them. Fortunately for us, none of these techniques have fully replicated the metamorphosis that takes place inside a real wood cask, so the need for coopers and their finished products is as strong as ever.



## Why wood?

Wooden barrels replaced clay pots and amphorae because they were lighter, stronger, could hold larger volumes and had a longer usable life. So despite the fact that barrel making required more time and a specialized labor force, the benefits far outweighed the drawbacks and barrels became the container of choice.

Wooden barrels had an added benefit: they imparted nutty, spicy and other flavors and aromas to the liquids they stored, further enhancing the drinkability of wine, beer and later of distilled spirits. But of all woods, why oak? Lesson II will answer this question in great detail.

## Family traditions, family names

In much the same way that the profession of smithing produced the common English

surname Smith and the German name Schmidt, the trade of cooperage also gave the English name *Cooper*, French name *Tonnelier* and *Tonnellier*, Greek name *Βαρελάς/Varelas*, Danish name *Bødker*, German names like *Faßbinder* (literally cask binder), *Böttcher* (tub maker), *Fässler* and *Keiper*, Dutch names like *Kuiper* or *Cuypers*, the Latvian name *Mucenieks*, the Hungarian name *Kádár*, *Bodnár*, Polish names such as *Bednarz*, *Bednarski* or *Bednarczyk*, the Czech name *Bednář*, the Romanian names *Dogaru* and *Butnaru*, Ukrainian family name *Bondarenko*, Ukrainian/Russian name *Bondar*, the Jewish name *Bodner* and the Portuguese names *Tanoeiro* and *Toneleiro*, Spanish *Cubero* and Macedonian *Bacvarovski* (Македонски: Бачваровски).

Join us again next month, as we continue to explore the world of barrels!

# 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



## Last Dinner

A couple of weeks ago, I received an invitation to attend a meeting of a cigar smoker's club. An informal gathering that provides a setting for friends to share a good time while smoking fine cigars. Since I was in Santiago, I accepted immediately.

The concept was very simple: there was an assortment of cigars on the table and attendees were free to select the one(s) they wanted. Each person was then responsible for their own bar tab.

I had forgotten what it was like to be in Santiago during the summer (the Southern hemisphere has the opposite weather as the Northern one), so the heat motivated me to lean towards cold beer, something I repeated several times.

Good conversations always emerge when you are surrounded by friends. Even if you don't know everyone around you, if all are passionate about cigars, it is as if we were all fans of the same football club and were at a sports bar watching our team play in a championship game!

The cigar assortment included some that I had previously smoked, from Fuller Cigar and also from Casa Magna, but there were new formats and I naturally went for those.

One of them was Atacama, from the Valles de Chile line, a cigar with a distinctive green band and with an excellent price/quality proposition. Its intensity was low-to-medium, but accompanied by a beer, it hardly came across as medium. In other words, the drink you pair the cigar with will invariably affect how you perceive the tobacco.



Got Rum? January 2026 - 62

Photos credit: @Cigarili



Photo credit: @Cigarili

The composition of the cigar includes tobacco leaves from Ecuador and from the Dominican Republic, thus resulting in the low intensity. The format I selected was a Robusto (5 x 50), or about a 30-minute smoking session.

More than finding the perfect beverage pairings for the cigars, the purpose of the gathering was for everyone to catch up. I took the opportunity to describe one of my recent pairings to one of the attendees.

This is what friendly reunions are for. Nowadays, most of us have children and finding the time to get together is complicated, so I took advantage of this opportunity and ended up smoking 3 cigars, while keeping myself properly hydrated!

It is essential to have opportunities like this one, for cigar aficionados such as us, even if they are not very frequent. I truly hope that you can make time to have one with your friends so that you too can have a great time, as I did in Santiago.

I wish everyone great success in 2026, may your dreams and goals become a reality. I hope that you remain healthy and that you always have a great bottle of rum nearby. May all negative thoughts and stresses dissipate with each puff from your cigars!

Warmest wishes to all!

Philip Ili Barake  
#GRCigarPairing



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