

Got Rum?®

MARCH 2026

FROM THE GRASS TO YOUR GLASS, SINCE 2001!



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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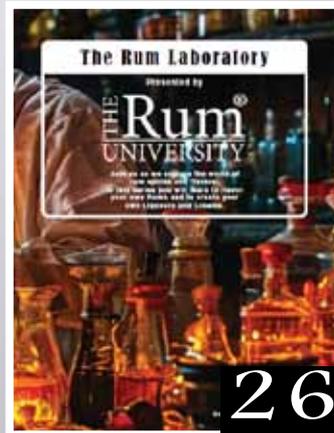
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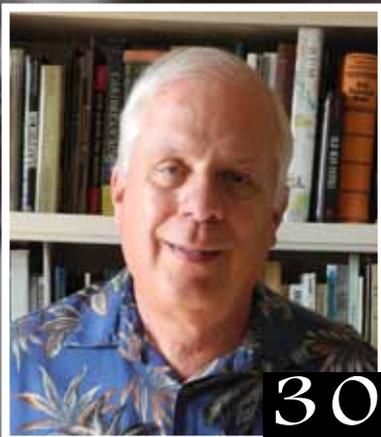


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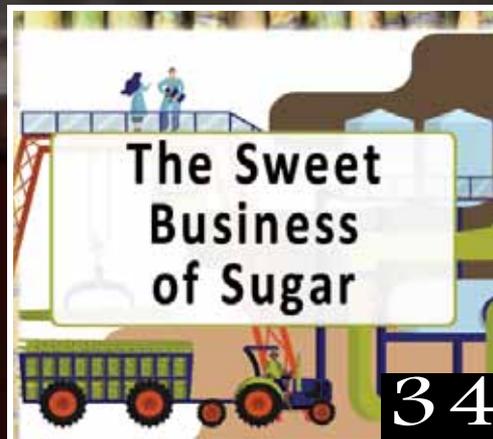
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FRONT COVER: Diving For Gold
INSIDE SPREAD: Releasing The Genie

FROM THE EDITOR

In Like a Lion, Out Like a Lamb

This popular proverb about March suggests that this month's weather usually starts fierce as a lion but ends soft as a lamb.

There is, however, a different interpretation: the constellation *Leo* (the lion), rises in the east at the beginning of March. Thus, the month "comes in like a lion," while the constellation of *Aries* (the ram), sets in the west at the end of the month, and hence, the month "will go out like a lamb."

I also like to think of it in terms of "actions and consequences": if you work hard at the beginning of the month, fiercely executing your business strategy and resisting temptations, then you can relax at month's end, enjoying the fruits of your labor.

My column last month made this point very clear: *"sooner or later, we all sit down to a banquet of consequences."* The distilled spirits industry is experiencing this firsthand, but distillers are not the only ones: wholesale distributors are also facing the *banquet of consequences*, in the form of contractions, receivership and disastrous brand exodus.

But every disaster and every vacancy creates a vacuum that is invariably filled in by someone or something else. If the incoming players are smart, they will come in like Leos, unafraid to tame the herd and to impose new law and



order, knowing that the new paradigm will, in time, allow them to relax and enjoy the rewards from their hard work.

*"The brown buds thicken on the trees,
Unbound, the free streams sing,
As March leads forth across the leas
The wild and windy spring."*

—Elizabeth Akers Allen (1832–1911)

March is upon us, and it will inevitably lead us to April. How we get there, however, is completely up to us.

Cheers!

Luis Ayala, *Editor and Publisher*

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

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

THE ANGEL'S SHARE

by Paul Senft



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

The desire to share this information led me to create www.RumJourney.com 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!

Appleton Estate 12 Year Old Rare Casks Rum

In January of 2026 I had the honor of leading a charity rum symposium in Atlanta that featured five 12-year-old rums from around the globe. While preparing for the symposium, I realized that the only rum in the lineup I had not reviewed was this one and decided to address it immediately. Produced at the Nassau Valley Distillery on the island of Jamaica, the company uses a blend of pot and column still rums that have been aged in used bourbon barrels for 12 years. Using limestone filtration, they blend the rum to 43% ABV and bottle it for distribution. The company does not use any added flavorings, colors, or sweeteners in the creation of their products.

Appearance

The custom flask-shaped bottle has a short-necked handle that is easy to pour. The front and back labels provide basic information about the rum in black and gold script, with the year 1749 embossed on the upper center of the bottle. The wood and brass cap is secured to the bottle with a clear wrap and holds a synthetic cork.

Swirling the mahogany liquid creates a thin band around the glass that thickens slightly and then releases a wave of thin legs down the sides of the glass. The band continues to thicken and releases a second wave of thicker, slower legs before leaving a ring of beads around the glass.

Nose

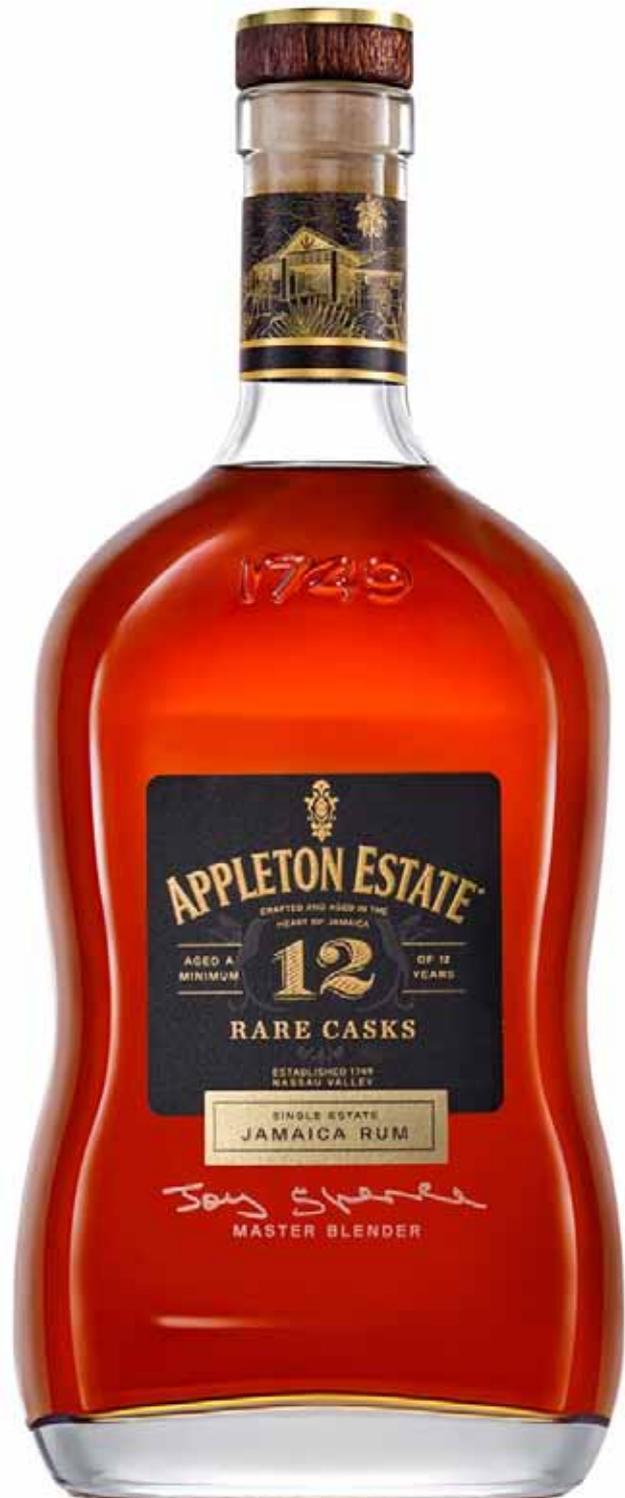
The aroma contains a swirl of wood spice, tobacco, caramel, lightly bitter orange zest, ripe bananas, dried apricots, and anise.

Palate

The first sip is a swirl of caramelized vanilla, orange zest, and warm oak spices of cinnamon, allspice, and clove. Additional sips reveal notes of hazelnut, dark chocolate, brown sugar, oak char, and cooked bananas. As the flavor profile begins to fade, the dried apricot and anise notes from the aroma manifest as the oak tannins take over and form a pleasantly long finish.

Review

The Appleton rum line was my introduction to Jamaican rums, and I have used the signature and eight-year-old rum blends in cocktails for years. This rum provides the quality I expected from the master blender, Joy Spence, and her team and is an enjoyable sipper as well as a quality cocktail ingredient. When experiencing the rum in a tasting, it is easy to see the aging progression between the eight-year-old and twelve-year-old blends and note how the eight is a bit more versatile in cocktails, while the twelve pairs well with grilled meat and, I am told, cigars. At the symposium, this was the audience's favorite due to the depth of the flavor profile and potential uses in comparison to the other rums in the tasting experience.



www.appletonestate.com

THE ANGEL'S SHARE

by Paul Senft

Goslings Spirited Seas Ocean Aged Rum

Goslings Rum was founded in 1806 by James Gosling when he opened their rum shop on the King's Parade, St. George, on the island of Bermuda. Little did he realize that his rum-blending operation would launch a brand that is now seven generations old, not to mention the oldest business on the island. The company sources rum from around the Caribbean and brings it to Bermuda, where they age, blend, and bottle their rum line. Which includes their core line of Gosling's Black Seal and Black Seal 151 and four limited-edition bottlings. Gosling's Spirited Seas Ocean Aged rum is created by taking aged bourbon barrels that have been aging their rums for an unspecified amount of time. Then they loaded the barrels onto a container ship and aged the rum for an additional year while the ship sailed the Atlantic back and forth from Bermuda to the United States. After the year had concluded, they blended the rum to 44% ABV and bottled it as part of their limited-edition line.

Appearance

The short-necked 750 ml bottle has dark blue, gold, and silver labels that provide basic information about the rum on the front. The back label shares some romantic marketing information about the inspiration behind the rum in a tiny gold script that is difficult to read. The plastic cap holds a synthetic cork and is secured to the bottle with a clear wrap.

The rum holds the traditional "dark" mahogany brown color of the Goslings line, which borders on opaque. In the glass, it lightens slightly but maintains the mahogany color. Swirling the liquid in the tasting glass creates a razor-thin line around the glass that slowly thickens and releases a single wave of legs down the side of the glass before evaporating, leaving behind a large band of residue.

Nose

The aroma of the rum leads with notes of caramel, sugary figs, and black cherries. As it opens, there is an interesting chocolate-hazelnut note that comes into play, followed by a dark roast Columbian coffee aroma that is punctuated by a light mineral note.

Palate

The first sip delivers an interesting swirl of caramel, peppercorn, salt, roasted walnuts and hazelnuts, and allspice. Additional sips reveal a chewy charred oak flavor that mingles and weaves with the other flavors, introducing notes of dried tobacco and molasses, forming a sweet, tannin-rich finish.

Review

There has been a great deal of hype related to rums being aged on the ocean and how the liquid in the barrels is forced to interact with the wood and draw the flavors out. There are some in the rum industry that champion the experimentation and others that think it is little more than marketing shenanigans and meaningless. Ultimately, the consumers will have their say and will decide via product sales if this method of aging was worth it.

Personally, I found the flavor profile interesting in a positive way. It was easy to see that it is a Gosling rum with all that goes with that name, but it was an interesting sipping experience. The staccato way the initial flavors hit the palate and then swirled and merged was unique. The flavors discovered throughout the tasting experience added to the depth and complexity of the rum and created an interesting puzzle of flavors to experience. I can see this rum functioning well as a dessert sipper, a cigar pairing experience, and as a cocktail ingredient in some classic cocktails. Overall, an interesting rum worthy of exploration.



www.goslingslimited.com

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COOKING WITH RUM

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

by Chef Susan Whitley





Rumilicious Chocolate Chip Cookies

This month we are celebrating Chocolate Chip Cookie Week (March 1st –7th)!
So please enjoy this delicious recipe of chocolate chip cookies
made with none other than our pride and joy, RUM!

Ingredients:

- ½ C. Butter, at room temperature
- 1 C. Brown Sugar
- ¾ C. Granulated White Sugar
- 2 Large Egg Whites
- 1 tsp. Vanilla Extract
- 3 Tbsp. Dark Rum
- 2¼ C. All-Purpose Flour
- 1 tsp. Baking Soda
- 1/8 tsp. Salt
- 1 C. Semisweet Chocolate Chips

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a large bowl, cream together butter and both sugars until fluffy. Add the egg whites and mix thoroughly then add the vanilla extract and dark rum and blend.
3. Mix in flour, baking soda and salt just till combined, do not over mix. Stir in the chocolate chips.
4. Using a scoop or tablespoon, add the dough in rounded tablespoons to a cookie sheet lined with parchment.
5. Bake for about 10 to 12 minutes, until lightly browned. Remove from the oven and allow the cookies to rest, about 3 to 5 minutes.
6. Remove to a cooling rack and cool thoroughly.



Photo credit: www.handletheheat.com

Banana Rum Cream Pie

March 2nd is National Banana Cream Pie Day!

Ingredients:

- 1¼ C. Graham Cracker Crumbs
- 5 Tbsp. Butter, melted
- ¼ tsp. Ground Cinnamon
- 3 Tbsp. + 8 Tbsp. Brown Sugar, packed
- 8 oz. Cream Cheese, softened
- 1 tsp. Fresh Lemon Zest, finely grated
- 1 C. Heavy Cream, chilled
- 1 tsp. Vanilla Extract
- 2 Tbsp. Dark Rum
- 4 Firm-ripe Bananas

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Before you preheat the oven, make sure to place oven rack in middle position.
2. Stir together crumbs, butter, cinnamon, and 3 tablespoons brown sugar in a bowl with a fork until combined well. Set aside about a tablespoon full of the crumb mixture for garnish later. Using a 9-inch pie plate, press crumb mixture evenly onto bottom and up the sides of pie plate. Bake crust for 10 minutes, then cool completely in pie plate on a cooling rack, about 20 minutes.
3. In an electric mixer, beat together cream cheese, lemon zest, and 8 tablespoons brown sugar on HIGH speed until light and fluffy, about 1 minute.
4. In a separate electric mixer, beat heavy cream, vanilla, and rum at MEDIUM speed until it holds soft peaks. Gently stir one third of whipped cream into the cream cheese mixture to lighten, then fold in remaining whipped cream gently but thoroughly.
5. Thinly slice bananas and arrange evenly over pie crust. Spread all of the cream filling over bananas, then sprinkle the reserved crumb mixture on top. Cover pie loosely and chill for 20 minutes. Ready to serve!



www.epicurious.com

THE RUM Mixologist

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

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What Is Mixology?

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

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



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THE RUM Mixologist

This Month's Cocktail:
Across the Pacific

This cocktail was created by Meaghan Dorman, the bar director of Dear Irving and The Raines Law Room in New York City. It elegantly combines funky Jamaican rum with rich orgeat, lime juice and a gentle touch of amaro.

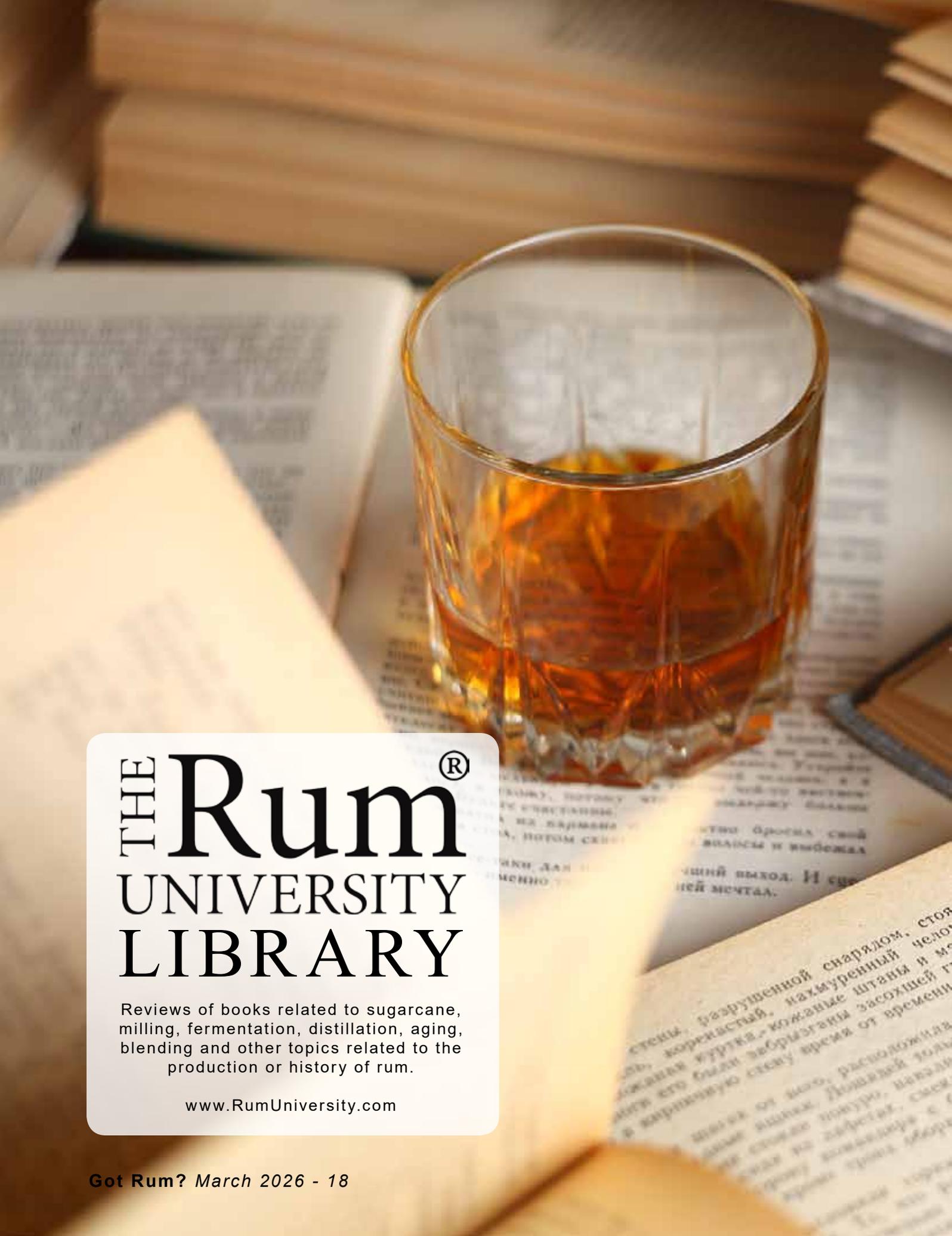
Ingredients:

- 1 ounce Appleton Reserve rum
- 1/2 ounce Smith & Cross Jamaican rum
- 1/2 ounce Averna amaro
- 3/4 ounce lime juice, freshly squeezed
- 3/4 ounce orgeat
- Garnish: lime wheel
- Garnish: grated nutmeg

Directions:

1. Add all ingredients into a shaker with one ice cube and shake until the ice melts and mixture is frothy.
2. Pour into a rocks glass filled with crushed ice.
3. Garnish with a lime wheel and grated nutmeg.



A glass of rum sits on a stack of books. The glass is filled with a golden-brown liquid and has a faceted base. The books are stacked in the background, with some pages visible in the foreground. The lighting is warm and focused on the glass.

THE Rum[®] UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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

www.RumUniversity.com

Colombiana: A Rediscovery of Recipes and Rituals from the Soul of Colombia by Mariana Velásquez

(Publisher's Review)

"I have never read a more passionate and heartfelt expression of Colombian culture and cuisine in English. I've been waiting for years for a book like this to come out."

—J. Kenji López-Alt, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Food Lab*.

A recipe developer and food stylist—whose work has taken her across the globe to work with clients like Michelle Obama and into the test kitchens of today's most esteemed culinary publications—pays homage to her native country with this vibrant, visually stunning cooking, the first dedicated solely to Colombian food, featuring 100 recipes that meld the contemporary and the traditional.

To Mariana Velásquez, a native of Bogotá, the diverse mix of heritages, cultures, and regions that comprise Colombian food can be summed up in one simple concept: More is more. No matter what rung of society, Colombians feed their guests well, and leave them feeling nourished in body and soul.

In *Colombiana*, the award-winning recipe developer and food stylist draws on the rich culinary traditions of her native land and puts her own modern twist on dishes beloved by generations of Colombians. Here are recipes for classics such as arepas and empanadas, as well as "Colombian-ish" recipes like *Lomito de Cerdo al Tamarindo y Menta* (Tamarind Pork Tenderloin with Mint), *Gazpacho de Papaya y Camarón Tostado* (Spicy Papaya and Charred Shrimp Gazpacho), and *Cuchuco de Trigo con Pollito y Limón* (Lemony Bulgur Farmer's Chicken Soup).

In addition to offering a unique perspective on Colombian food, Mariana shares the vibrant style of Colombian tablescapes and entertaining. For her, the best meals are never simply about the food on the table—they are an alchemy of atmosphere, drinks,

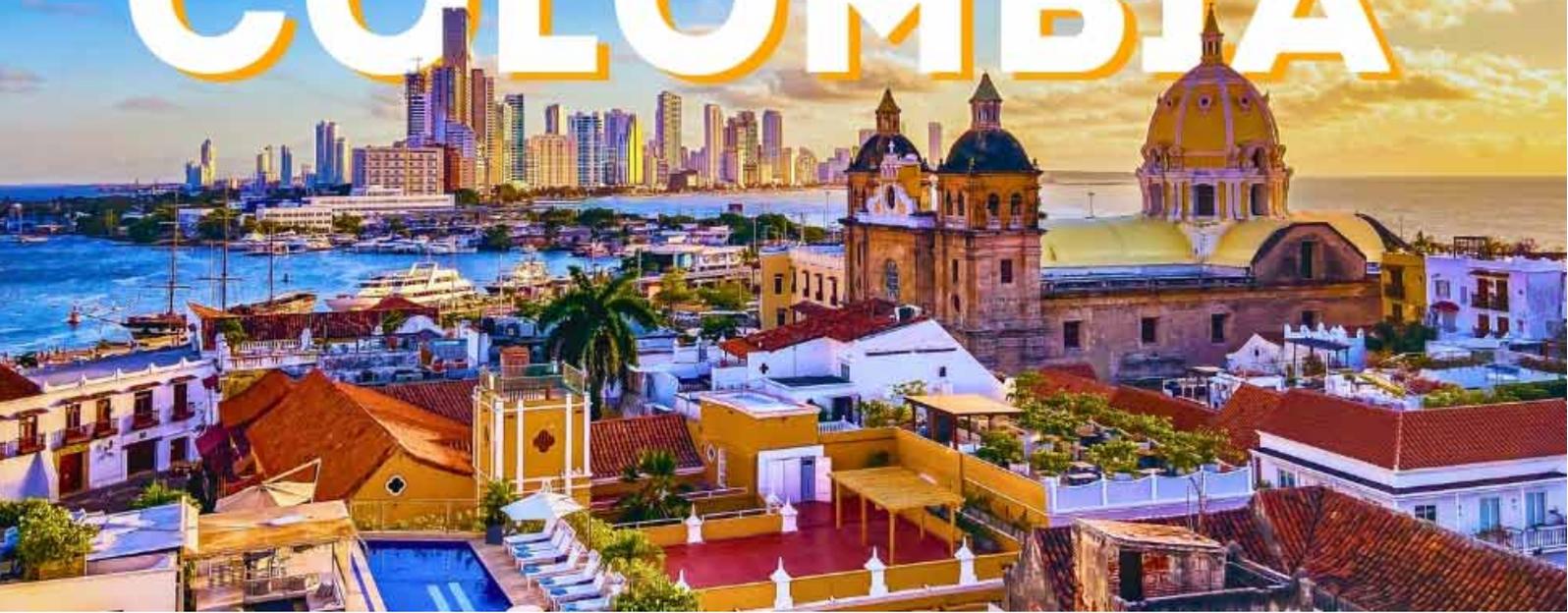


and simple snacks and sweets that complete the experience and make it memorable.

Rich with culture and stories as well as one-of-a-kind recipes and stunning photography, *Colombiana* is a gastronomic excursion that reminds us of the power of food to keep tradition alive.

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COLOMBIA



Traditional Colombian Beverages

1. **Aguapanela.** Aguapanela, also known as *limonada de panela*, *agua e' panela*, or '*aguapanela*' in Colombia, is a refreshing, energizing drink and at the same time, a home remedy to alleviate cold symptoms. It is made with panela, water, and sometimes lemon juice, and is consumed throughout Colombia, either hot or cold. Aguapanela is especially popular in Colombian culture, as it is part of the daily life of Colombians. It is often served with cheese, almojábana, or arepa. There is even an alcoholic version called 'canelazo', made with cinnamon and aguardiente.



2. **Colombian Champús.** These drinks, mostly known and consumed in Valle del Cauca, are made with panela syrup, corn, and local fruits like lulo, pineapple, or soursop. They are then flavored with cloves and cinnamon to taste. They are blended and served with lots of ice as refreshing drinks for the hot days in the salsa capital. They are often accompanied by the traditional 'pandebono' or empanadas from Valle del Cauca.

3. **Chicha.** It is one of the traditional Latin American drinks, made from fermented corn with sugar. In Colombia, depending on the region, it can be made from pineapple or cassava, although it is originally from the Andean region of Colombia. Its alcohol content and its sweet or bitter taste vary depending on the fermentation time. Chicha is originally an indigenous Muisca drink, which gradually became popular, so much so that today it can be found in the center of Bogotá.

4. **Refajo.** There's nothing more Colombian than refajo, a drink made by combining beer with soda, usually red kola or the famous 'Colombiana' soda. It is one of the most popular drinks on Colombian tables, whether for celebrations or simply sharing a meal, as it became a custom since the 1990s, so much so that it even came out with its own product presentation.

5. **Masato.** It is one of the most popular artisanal drinks in the departments of Cundinamarca, Santander, and Tolima. Like chicha, it is fermented and made from cereals like rice, corn, and wheat, or tubers like cassava. It is often served with almojábana or yuca bread, consumed cold, and usually enjoyed as a snack (in the morning or afternoon).



6. **Viche.** This artisanal drink from the Colombian Pacific is made from sugarcane juice, and various ingredients are added to enhance its flavor. Its alcohol content is similar to that of aguardiente, and from viche, other Colombian drinks like 'arrechón', 'tumbacatre', and 'tomaseca' are derived. In the past, viche was used for stomach aches and as a remedy to increase vigor and fertility, and it has always been known for its aphrodisiac effects.

7. **Aguardiente.** It is colloquially known as 'guaro' and is one of the quintessential Colombian drinks. Aguardiente is a distilled drink made from sugarcane and anise, considered to be the national liquor of Colombia. It is traditionally enjoyed neat and cold. Its consumption is very popular in different cities of Colombia, where emblematic brands like Tapa Roja from Tolima, Doble Anís from Huila, Antioqueño, Néctar from Cundinamarca, among others are sold. Nowadays, premium or ultra-premium Colombian brands such as Aguardiente Mil Demonios have even been introduced to the market.

8. **Chirrinchi.** It is one of the traditional drinks of the indigenous Wayuu people in La Guajira, Colombia. It is a liquor made by distilling sugarcane panela, mixed with various spices. For the Wayuu people, it is an important drink as part of their celebrations and rituals. However, in Bogotá, a different version of chirrinchi can be found, made with herbs and fruits such as fennel, lemongrass, and chamomile.

9. **Borojó.** This drink is attributed with aphrodisiac effects, as well as nutritional and healing properties. It is a juice made from borojó, a purple or brown fruit (only found in Chocó), mixed with water, milk, sugar or panela, vanilla, eggs, and ice. It is usually consumed at breakfast or as a snack.

10. **Sabajón.** It is a liquor made from aguardiente, very popular for its sweet and creamy flavor, as it includes: milk, egg yolks, condensed milk, and cinnamon. This is one of the traditional drinks of Colombian Christmas celebrations, but it is also enjoyed year-round. It is typically served cold as an aperitif. Continue exploring Colombia's cultural and gastronomic diversity, and you will realize its richness and authenticity.



Source: <https://colombia.co>





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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".



THE RUM HISTORIAN'S TIMELESS REVIEW: MODERN CARIBBEAN RUM

With this article, the column The Rum Historian is enriched with a new sub-category, which we have decided to call TIMELESS REVIEW. As the name suggests, it is dedicated to book reviews, but a rather special kind of review. Usually, reviews are written about newly-published books, to make them better known, praise them or criticize them. Instead, I will be focusing on books that came out some time ago but that, in my opinion, still deserve to be read, or read again. The first article is about a book that is "only" 4 years old, but I'm also going to review books that are decades or even centuries old. Books of all kinds, which I believe are important too, in order to understand rum and its history, but with two shared characteristics: they must be published in English and they must be easy to find, that is, books that our readers can actually get and read without problems. Let's begin.

"A big book is a big problem" the great British logician Bertrand Russell used to say. To-day he is almost forgotten, but when I was young he was a word-wide famous philosopher, popularizer, pacifist, and Nobel Prize-winning writer, a true *maître à penser*. He often used humor and sharp

aphorisms to critique intellectual habits and this phrase captures his skepticism toward unnecessarily long works. He valued concise, precise arguments rather than sprawling volumes. And undoubtedly the book I am going to present today is big, very big indeed: Matt Pietrek and Carrie Smith's "MODERN CARIBBEAN RUM A Contemporary Reference to the Region's Essential Spirit". Published in 2022, the book weighs about eight pounds/ roughly 3.6 kilograms, reflecting its 850-page, image-rich, oversized format.

For its size, the wealth of its photographs, the care put into its design and printing, and its price, at a first glance it may seem like yet another coffee-table book. Yes, because the rum world is full of coffee-table books: beautiful, expensive books meant to be given as gifts, displayed, flipped through, but not truly read, and even less studied. Basically useless.

Instead, "MODERN CARIBBEAN RUM" is a genuine guide to understanding rum: rich in all kinds of information, accurate, authoritative, and well written. It deserves to be read carefully by every rum enthusiast who wants to know more, much more, about our favourite spirit. I recommend reading it all the way through first, and then returning to individual chapters to delve more deeply into the topics that interest you the most. Given its size, it's impossible to summarize it, so I will limit myself to presenting a few excerpts that clarify some fundamental aspects, starting with what rum actually is, and what the book is really about:

"we can define rum as a distilled spirit made from the sugarcane plant; freshly distilled rum should have the aroma, taste, and essence of sugarcane. You may have read that rum is made from molasses, but that's an incomplete definition. Molasses is just one form of sugarcane resulting from removing some of its sugar content. Some rums are made directly from sugarcane juice, and others are made from cane syrup, a less-processed version of molasses. ... However, not all sugarcane spirits are known as rum in their countries of origin. Cachaça,

aguardiente de caña, charanda, clairin, and grogue are also distilled spirits made from sugarcane. We call the group of distilled spirits made from sugarcane cane spirits. Rum is a subcategory of *cane spirits*. ... The focus is Caribbean rum today, not a historical perspective."

The topic of the rules, which change from country to country and only in a few cases have international recognition, is well addressed: "Spirits like bourbon, Scotch whisky, and cognac have regulations that are broadly recognized in major markets, this isn't the case of rum."

The book then covers the fundamentals of rum-making, and correctly starts with the fermentation process:

"Because the input and outputs of the fermentation process are both liquids, it's important to differentiate. We do this by using specific terminology for each. The input to fermentation is a liquid containing sugar but no alcohol. This liquid is typically referred to as *mash*, *must* or *wort*. ... When fermentation is complete, the resulting liquid has little or no sugar; most of the sugar has been converted into ethanol. This liquid is variously known as *wash*, *wine* or *beer*." In this book they use mash and wash.

"Most rum fermentations take between 24 and 120 hours to consume all the fermentable sugar in the mash. When fermentation completes, the wash is usually between six and nine percent ABV. ... In general, shorter fermentation yields a wash lower in flavor compounds and higher in alcohol, e.g., nine percent ABV or higher. These washes are typically column distilled to 90 percent ABV or higher, making 'light rum'. Spanish heritage producers like those of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Panama favor this fermentation style and focus on flavor creation in the aging process. We might call these rums *aging-forward*. Longer ferments generally create a more flavorful wash at the expense of alcohol strength. Typically such washes measure around five or six percent ABV: These fermentations are typically pot-distilled to create a 'heavy' rum; such fermentation

are commonly found in Jamaica and other regions where pungent rums are favored.”

About sugar in rum, “Our simple distillation model suggests any type of molecules can pass out of the still; in reality many don’t. These molecules are categorized as *non-volatile*, meaning they don’t vaporize and pass into the final distillate. Among the many non-volatile compounds is sugar. Any unfermented sugar molecules in a wash prior to distillation do not vaporize, so they cannot be found in the resulting distillate. Regardless of whether you are distilling whiskey, brandy, vodka or rum, no freshly made distillate contains sugar. Any sugar in your rum bottle was added after distillation”

After briefly describing batch distillation, here is the often little-known Retort:

“Most Caribbean distillers use an elegant evolution of the simple pot still, which enables a single distillation pass to provide a spirit of sufficient alcoholic strength. The key to this improvement is a vessel known as a *retort*. A retort is a closed vessel that acts like another pot still. Retorts are squat, cylindrically shaped, and connected in line to the main pot still. ... Retorts generally are smaller than the pot still they’re connected to. ... The pot’s lyne arm doesn’t go to the condenser. Instead, the arm travels through the top of the retort and plunges below the surface of the liquid. Picture a plastic straw inserted into a full juice box. ...In short, a retort-enabled still effectively performs two distillations – the first in the pot still, the second in the retort. The distillate from the first distillation feeds immediately into the second without being cooled first. The process is more energy-efficient than traditional double distillation.”

And about continuous distillation:

“The first column, where the alcohol and congeners vapors are separated from the liquid wash, is called a *stripping column* or *analyzer*. The second column, which further enriches the vapor from the first column, is called a *spirit column* or *rectifier*. ...The liquid removed from

the plates is the distillate. ... Each plate develops its own congeners ratios, which don’t change much over time. Due to gravity’s effect, the lowest plate has nearly all heavy congeners and very few light congeners. Likewise, the top plate is nearly all very light congeners and very few heavy congeners. The plates in between have their own their own ratios that favor lighter congeners the higher up in the still they are placed. ... continuous distillation has vastly more reflux, so it can much more effectively separate organic compounds. This allows column stills to create rum at up 96 percent ABV. Such rum has fewer flavor congeners, so it is traditionally known as *light rum*.”

Naturally, ample space is dedicated to aging:

“Today the vast majority of spirit casks are 200 liters, a size known as *barrel*. Other common cask sizes are the *hogshead* (250 liters), *butt* (500 liters) and *pipe* (650 liters). ... The vast majority of rum ages in *American Standard Barrel*, a 200-liter cask made from oak, nearly always *American white oak* (*Quercus alba*). This wood is known for imparting vanilla-like notes that are very familiar to bourbon and chardonnay drinkers. ... Aging is a slow transformation of the congeners in rum. During aging, new flavors form, while others diminish.” Concerning the long-standing, troublesome issue of the years of aging declared on the label by many brands, I refer you to the book; it’s much too important, and much too delicate, a topic to be summarised here in few words.

The clarification on congeners is particularly important:

“A rum at 40 percent ABV (80 proof) contains 40 percent ethanol, around 59 percent water, and less than one percent of other organic flavor compounds. For a typical bottle, that’s at most 7 ml or one quarter of an ounce. ... This flavor compounds form at different points during rum making – some are created during fermentation, others during distillation, and many more are introduced during aging. ... *Congeners* are the organic

compounds other than ethanol that form during fermentation, and they are a subset of the organic compound present in rum. Other organic compounds will join the mix during distillation and aging, but those are not considered congeners. Here we shall use *congener* or *organic compounds* appropriately for each context.”

A large section is devoted to the rum produced in Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries:

“Spanish heritage rum dominates worldwide sales, yet this type of rum is the most mischaracterized and misunderstood. ... some rums developed substantial quantities of flavor congeners during fermentation ... Other rums develop much of their flavor during aging; Spanish heritage rums are in the second camp. Aging transform these relatively light distillates into the flavors we associate with the Spanish heritage style. Such rums trace their lineage to the multifaceted aging traditions of Spanish sherry and brandy, techniques utilizing aging in multiple types of casks, re-oxygenating rum between aging steps, blending rums of different weights and ages, and solera aging. It’s far more complex than, ‘Put it in the barrel and forget it. ... A fermentation that lasts for 24 or 32 hours and finishes at 9 percent ABV is quite common. ... Some rum makers, notably those in Cuba, age fresh distillate for a few years, then pass it through carbon filters before returning it to a different cask for further aging. Why undertake this extra step? Typically, the first aging cask is newer, so it imparts more wood extracted flavors such as vanilla and tannins- similar to what you’d expect in bourbon. Some of the flavors are pleasing, while other are not. By carefully filtering with the right filtration media, unpleasant flavors are reduced while most desired flavors remain. The casks used for subsequent aging are older and provide less wood extract flavors. In this stage, oxidative aging is the goal. This process is aided by the oxygen reintroduced to the rum after being dumped from the first cask. The geographical indication for Cuban rum requires this two-stages process.”

I owe a lot to this book because it taught me things I didn’t know and clarified others that I knew only in a somewhat confused way. In particular, I appreciated the consistency and precision in the use of technical rum-making terminology, which for me has always been a challenge. Let me explain. My native language is Italian, but when it comes to rum I read and write mostly in English. However, my first and most fundamental training happened in Spanish, back in the days of the never-praised-enough International Rum Congress in Madrid. And to top it off, add a sprinkle of French and Portuguese from my research into the origins of rum. So yes, sometimes things get a bit muddled in my head. Thanks therefore to Matt and Carrie, whose limpid prose offers me a sort of standard in English, thus helping me bring order to my knowledge.

The book rightly devotes plenty of space to Cuba, where the authors encountered the same problems I did: “DISCLAIMER In researching this chapter, numerous requests for information were made to Cuba Ron and Tecnoazúcar. However, Cuba’s government tightly controls its communications. As a result, this chapter’s information regarding distilleries and brands substantially draws upon unofficial sources such as newspaper articles or obscure documents on Cuban websites. No representatives of Cuba’s rum industry have vetted what follows. The distillery details are far from complete and may not be correct in all cases.”

In conclusion, it’s a big book, but it’s not a big problem, on the contrary, it’s an enjoyable read that helps one better understand the complex world of rum. I have only one complaint: its weight obliged me to read it sitting at my desk, rather than snugly sunk into my comfy armchair, in front of my favorite window!

Marco Pierini



THE Rum[®]
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Got Rum? March 2026 - 28

The Rum Laboratory

Presented by

THE **Rum**[®]
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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 Coconut Rum Cream

There are very few things that remind us of summer on the beach, as the smell of coconut and the taste of rum. Now you can bring these two together in the comfort of your own home.

Ingredients

- 1 Cup Sugar
- 1 Cup Water
- 1 Can (14 oz) of Coconut Milk (or make your own, see facing page)
- 2 tsp Coconut Extract
- 1 Cup of White Rum at 50% ABV

Procedure

Make a simple syrup by combining water and sugar, constantly stirring over medium to high heat until it reaches the boiling point. Remove from heat let stand until it reaches room temperature.

Combine the simple syrup, coconut milk and the coconut extract until they are thoroughly mixed. Add the rum and stir until the rum has been fully incorporated. Store in the refrigerator for up to one month. Shake well before serving.



THE Rum[®] UNIVERSITY

Making your own Coconut Milk

Ingredients

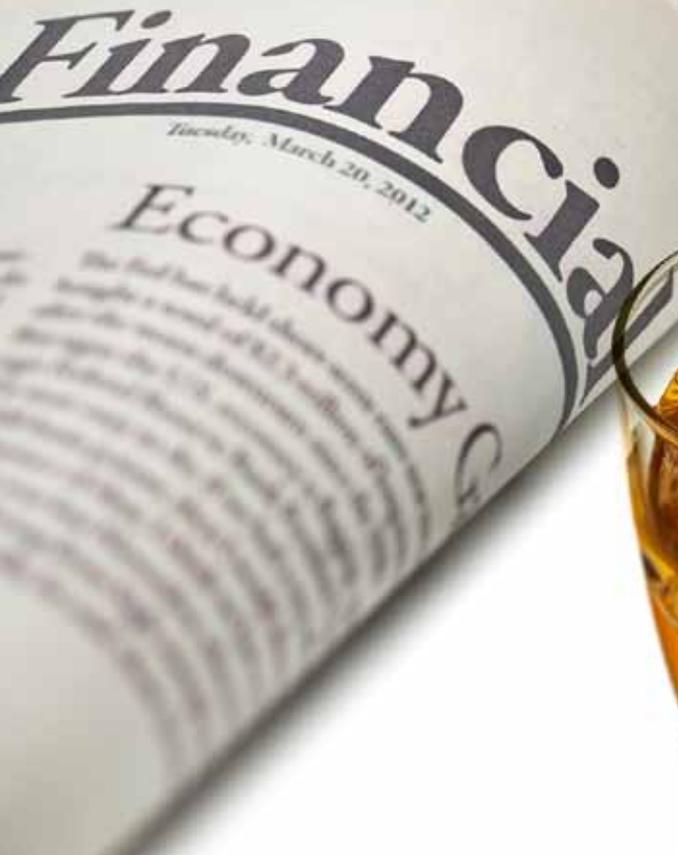
- 4 cups of Water
- 1.5-2 cups of Shredded Coconut (unsweetened)

Procedure

1. Heat water, but don't boil. It should be hot, but not scalding.
2. Put coconut in blender and add water. (If all water won't fit, you can add the water in two batches).
3. Blend on high for several minutes until thick and creamy.
4. Pour through a mesh colander first to get most of the coconut out, and then squeeze through a towel or several thicknesses of cheesecloth to get remaining pieces of coconut out.
5. If you have to split the water, put all the coconut that you strained out back in the blender, add the remaining water, and repeat.
6. Consume immediately or store in the fridge for up to 3-4 days.

RUM IN THE NEWS

by Mike Kunetka



STADES RUM

Stade's Rum recently launched two limited edition rums from its Distiller's Vault Collection: Vulcan Two Taps, distilled in a triple-chamber still, and Old Gregg Fusion, a blend of fresh cane juice rum and molasses rum passed through an early 1900s pot still. Founded in 1893 by George Stade, a visionary engineer and distiller, the Stade's West Indies Rum Distillery has always been a hotbed of innovation. He filed patents, built his own stills, and meticulously documented his experiments. Today, that innovative spirit endures, championed by Managing Director and Historian Andrew Hassell, Master Distiller Don Benn, and Master Blender Alexandre Gabriel. At the heart of the distillery is a locked room, the Distiller's Vault, a veritable sealed archive filled with blueprints, recipes, handwritten notes, experiment logs, and decades of quiet innovation. These documents now come to life in liquid form, not as historical replicas, but as bold reinterpretations for today's most curious rum lovers. "These rums are more than just products; they are the continuation of a vision," explains Don Benn. "Every detail comes from an authentic source. The tools, the ingredients, the methods,

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.

we use knowledge that has remained hidden for decades.” Vulcan Two Taps is named as a homage to the Vulcan triple-chamber still, the last original example still in operation in the world and still in service at Stade’s. This extremely rare still was restored in 2018 thanks to Henderson “Digger” Skinner, a Stade’s veteran, who perpetuated a gesture passed down from generation to generation: when the still stalls, you just have to give it two taps with the hose... hence its name. Vulcan Two Taps is bottled at 50.50% ABV. Old Gregg Fusion blends a fresh sugarcane juice rum (made from cane crushed at Stade’s Harper sugar mill) and a molasses rum (made from molasses from Port Vale, the last remaining sugar mill on the island). Both rums are distilled in the Old Gregg pot still, dating back to the early 1900s, then aged and blended in Barbados to reveal the vibrant tension between herbaceous freshness and profound richness. Old Gregg Fusion is bottled at 46% ABV.
<https://maisonferrand.com/brand/stades-rum>

RUM GEOGRAPHY

The Rum Geography is one of my favorite rum websites. Inspired by his own travel and industry experiences at distilleries and destinations, Ewan Henderson started The Rum Geography in 2023 with research by rum and tech specialists. The platform emerged after discovering a vast, often hidden, rum landscape. The United States alone has hundreds of unique craft distilleries struggling for visibility in the changing digital landscape. To solve this, he and his team built a dedicated place for rum fans to discover rum distilleries and brands, plan their rum adventures, and navigate interactive maps and destination guides. This gives travelers the relevant information to make confident and informed travel decisions. “With travel firmly back and a generational shift of experience-seekers craving slower, more authentic adventures, that support local communities, we bridge that gap for unique itineraries. Imagine the Lonely Planet, but exclusively for rum. In-depth guides and insider tips unlock richer vacation experiences for more convenient travel planning” says Henderson. The website has several levels of information. It starts with seven region, North America, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Aasia/Pacific and African/Indian Ocean. A click on the region takes you to a list of countries. Select a country and a map appears showing rum distilleries. Click a distillery and you get a page that has a location map, basic company information, traveler’s comments and further links for the distillery’s email address, phone number and website. There are also detailed Travel Guides to eight countries and fourteen US states. Ewan just added a list of over ninety rum festivals and rum events for 2026.
<https://rumgeography.com/>

RUM TAX COVER-OVER HELPS SMALL DISTILLERIES IN PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rico Gov. Jenniffer González Colón announced the signing of agreements that will allow nine small and midsize rum producers to access the federal Rum Tax Cover Over program, expanding benefits previously limited to large manufacturers. The Rum Tax Cover Over is a federal policy that provides returning excise distillers taxes of \$13.25 per gallon of rum produced in Puerto Rico back to the Island’s treasury. Until recently, Bacardi, Destilería Serrallés and Club Caribe were the key recipients of the tax cover-over, all legacy brands, with many years on the market. Access to the program for the nine companies covers at least 18 Puerto Rican rum brands across multiple categories and styles. Participating distillers include Destilería Coquí Inc., Caray LLC, Artesano Rum Corp., Laboratorio Clandestino Viequense Inc., Rincón Rum Inc., Ronés Superiores de Puerto Rico & Compañía Inc., Sabor Boricua LLC, San Juan Artisan Distillers LLC and Trigo Corp. The Weekly Journal reported that the addition of nine new distilleries will mark the first time that small and medium sized producers will benefit from the federal policy. “For the first time, (small and medium-sized businesses) will begin to receive this rum tax refund. By incorporating these new producers into the program, we will strengthen and expand the base, the production and export base of Puerto Rican rum,” said Governor Jenniffer González Colón. The governor added that over 80% of the rum sold in the United States and the world comes from Puerto Rico, giving the Island the title of the “Rum Capital of the World”. She also added that the industry alone creates 800 jobs and that between 2024 and 2025, rum sales increased by 800,000 gallons, reaching 31.6 million gallons in rum sold. “That’s also a production record, and I’m sure we’re going to break it with the sales of the new rums that are being added,” she added. Of the money that is sent to the Puerto Rican Treasury by the tax cover-over, 46% goes back to the distillers, who will use it to benefit their operations. For Ponce López, the owner of the Sabor Boricua Distillery in Caguas, the returns are a vital step in the growth of his business. “This will help us use that reimbursement to develop our brand, buy equipment, everything related to marketing, and the jobs it can generate. It’s a great opportunity for us to continue growing our market and what we do by hand,” he said. According to Sebastián Negrón Reichard, Secretary of the Department of Economic Development and Commerce (DDEC), “the rates are not fixed but based on contingent of results. These agreements are between the government and the rum producer to reinvest a portion of the tax cover over in production,

marketing, infrastructure, and the expansion of these products in the United States, provided and only if the rum is produced in Puerto Rico and sold in the United States. They are not automatic incentives; they are incentives conditioned on the outcome.”

LA MAISON & VELIER

The Magnum Series began in 2021 when La Maison & Velier, in collaboration with the Magnum Press Agency, sought to connect some of the world’s best rum distilleries with some of the world’s best photographers. Founded in 1947 by some of the greatest names in photography, Magnum Press brings together some of the world’s most legendary photojournalists. This year’s release pays tribute to Alex Webb, the American photographer renowned for his vibrant, complex, and intense street photography. A member of Magnum Photos since 1979, Alex Webb is a pioneer of color photography. Unlike the clean lines of traditional photojournalism, Webb’s work is famous for its complexity and chaos. He fills the frame with layers of activity, deep shadows, and saturated, intense colors. For this year’s release, the lineup includes two Jamaican heavyweights, a visit to Martinique, and a surprising entry from Australia. Each label features one of Webb’s “Hot Light” compositions.

- **BEENLEIGH 8 YEAR** - Established in 1884 on the banks of the Albert River in South East Queensland, Beenleigh stands as a monument to Australian rum history. The distillery sources molasses exclusively from the Rocky Point Sugar Mill, the country’s last remaining private mill. Its unique character comes from a dual distillation process: a first pass through a column still followed by a final distillation in ‘The Old Copper,’ a legendary pot still in operation since 1889. Aged in ex-bourbon casks and bottled at a robust 60% ABV, this limited edition captures the unmistakable, bold profile that defines Beenleigh.
- **CLARENDON 10 YEAR** - Located in the south of Jamaica, Clarendon Distillery is a cornerstone of the state-run National Rums of Jamaica. Established in 1949 on the historic grounds of the Monymusk Sugar Estate, the distillery is renowned for its exceptional versatility. Utilizing both pot and column stills, Clarendon masters the full spectrum of molasses-based rums—from the ethereal and light to the heavy and intense—each defined by a unique system of marks. While the majority of its production supplies global brands, rare casks are occasionally secured by independent bottlers. This specific expression, distilled in a column still, is a pristine example of the Clarendon MBS mark.
- **SAINT JAMES 12 YEAR** - Established in 1765, Saint James is the oldest and largest distillery in Martinique, standing as a true

pillar of the island’s rum heritage. Following its acquisition by Cointreau, the distillery was relocated in 1974 from Saint-Pierre to Sainte-Marie on the Atlantic coast. Now under the stewardship of La Martiniquaise, Saint James continues to uphold the rigorous standards of the Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée (AOC). Distilled in a traditional Creole column, this expression is a blend of two exceptional vintages—2003 and 2010. It was bottled on-site at 45% ABV, capturing the authentic essence of aged Rhum Agricole.

- **HAMPDEN 13 YEAR** - Established in 1753 in the Trelawny Parish, often cited as the ‘Grand Cru’ of Jamaican rum, Hampden Estate stands as the undisputed icon of the heavy pot still style. For nearly three centuries, the distillery has maintained unchanged production methods to create spirits of unparalleled character. This 2010 vintage holds a special place in history: at the time of its release, it was the oldest fully tropical-aged stock in the estate’s inventory. Bearing the classic LROK mark (Light Rum Owen Kelly, dating back to 1952) with an ester count of 200–400 gr/HIPA, this 13-year-old rum is bottled at 60% ABV, offering a profound depth of flavor and complexity.

Magnum Series releases will be available in both 700ml and impressive 1.5l bottles.
<https://www.lmvusa.com/>

DESERT DIAMOND DISTILLERY

Speaking of (or writing about) the Ultimate Awards, I was happy to see that a nearby distillery in the small desert town of Kingman, Arizona won a Silver Medal for their 10 Year Gold Miner Barrel Reserve Rum in the 8+ Year category and a Bronze Medal for their Gold Miner Agave Rum in the Flavored Rum category. Who would have thought you could make award winning rum in the middle of the desert?

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

LA BARONESA GALAPAGOS SINGLE CASK

Dirk Becker’s Rum Depot in Berlin began releasing single cask bottlings under their own brand called Rum Club Private Selection in 2012. The latest offering is La Baronesa Galapagos Single Cask, an exclusive and strictly limited premium rum originating from the captivating Galapagos Islands. Bottled as a single cask, each bottle comes from a single barrel, offering a truly unique tasting experience. Fresh sugarcane juice is used in its production and is distilled twice in a traditional pot still using an elaborate process. The entire aging process takes place on the Galapagos Islands, giving the rum its distinctive character and making it a true ambassador of its origin. Johan Romero, Master Distiller at Romero & Sons, is responsible for creating this masterpiece. He

is considered one of the most influential figures in the Ecuadorian rum scene and brings his extensive knowledge and passion to every bottle of La Baronesa. His expertise and dedication guarantee the high quality and exceptional character of this rum. The story of La Baronesa dates back to 2014, when the first production runs took place in a newly built distillery on Santa Cruz, the second largest island in the Galapagos archipelago. Since then, only a very limited number of casks have been produced – today, only eight casks remain, exclusively for the European market. Each bottling is a single cask bottling at cask strength, meaning the rum is neither diluted nor otherwise altered. This uncompromising approach ensures an authentic taste experience and makes each bottle a highly sought-after collector's item. The name La Baronesa is a tribute to the legendary Baroness Eloise von Wagner Bosquet, whose eccentric life and mysterious disappearance in the 1930s remain part of the fascinating mythology of the Galapagos Islands. Her story lends the rum not only a historical connection but also a mysterious aura that enriches the drinking experience in a special way. Thus, La Baronesa combines the highest level of craftsmanship with a captivating narrative, embodying the heart and soul of the Galapagos Islands in every single bottle. La Baronesa is bottled at 48.8% ABV. <https://www.rum-depot.de/La-Baronesa-Galapagos-Single-Cask/RD12678>

HALE'IWA DISTILLING

As a third-generation moonshiner from West Virginia, Nate Sisler, founder of Hale'iwa Distilling Company, sought to share his family's rum distilling tradition. His business gives him a chance to pursue that interest and to create a place for the community and other entrepreneurs. Back in 2021, Sisler started laying the foundation for the distillery at the Waialua Sugar Mill on O'ahu's North Shore, hoping to foster close-knit connections with farmers and his neighbors. Since opening in 2025, Hale'iwa Distillery Co. has shared handcrafted products distilled in-house, and provided a stage for local musicians, artists and entrepreneurs to share their work. The company prides itself on its artisanal approach, where each batch of rum is carefully distilled and aged to perfection. By embracing sustainable practices and supporting local farmers, Hale'iwa Distilling Company not only creates a premium product but also contributes to the community and environment, reinforcing its commitment to the Aloha spirit. The production of Hawaii Mana Rum is a meticulous process that begins with the selection of high-quality sugarcane sourced from local farms. The sugarcane is processed into molasses, which serves as the base for the rum, and then

fermented using a unique blend of yeast that enhances the flavor profile. <https://www.haleiwadistillingco.com/>

KULEANA RUM WORKS

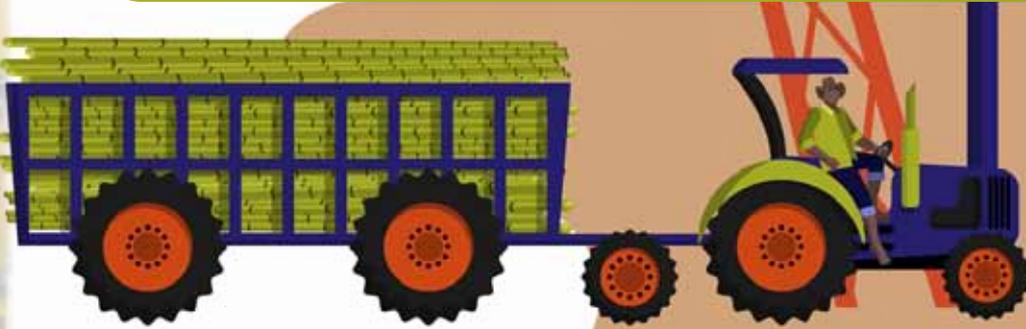
Kuleana Rum Works is now offering Farm-to-Glass Tours in chauffeured Sprinter vans every Monday. The Farm to Glass Tour is a unique experience designed for rum enthusiasts, adventure seekers, and those curious about the islands' storied agricultural roots. The tour, conducted in deluxe Sprinter vans for ultimate comfort, starts and ends at the Kuleana Rum Works Experience Center in Queens' Marketplace located in the Waikoloa Beach Resort. The first stop will be at the Kuleana Rum Works Farm, near Hāwī, North Kohala. Step onto their lush farm and hear the captivating tale of kō, Hawaii's original sugarcane, brought by Wayfinders as a "canoe plant" over a millennium ago. Discover how they cultivated nearly 30 distinct Hawaiian varieties, shaping the island's agricultural heritage. Witness their harvesting process and savor a glass of freshly pressed wai kō (sugarcane juice), straight from the source. Next stop is at the Kuleana Rum Works Distillery in Kawaihae. Venture behind the scenes at their state-of-the-art distillery. Learn the art and science of rum-making and see why Kuleana Rum is recognized among the world's best. From fermentation to bottling, experience the craftsmanship that sets Kuleana apart. Then, it is back to the Queens' Marketplace where you will unwind and indulge in a guided tasting of their four award-winning, additive-free rums. Explore the nuanced flavors and rich heritage of each spirit in the vibrant atmosphere of the Kuleana Rum Shack. <https://kuleanarum.com/>

KŌ HANA HAWAIIAN AGRICOLE RUM

Kō Hana has opened their new tasting experience at the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center with House of Mana Up and Mānoa Chocolate, a shared space celebrating Hawaii's finest craft, flavor and artistry. You can choose between two experiences: Reserve Hawaiian Agricole Rum & Estate Chocolate Pairing - Savor Kō Hana's signature Hawaiian Agricole Rums alongside artisan chocolate from Mānoa Chocolate, a pairing designed to highlight flavor, terroir, and craftsmanship. Hawaiian Cocktail & Chocolate Pairing - Savor a thoughtfully curated pairing featuring Kō Hana Ready to Drink Cocktails and rich, handcrafted chocolate from Mānoa Chocolate. Both options celebrate Hawai'i-made craft, locally grown ingredients, and intentional flavor pairings, no advance selection required. <https://www.kohanarum.com/>

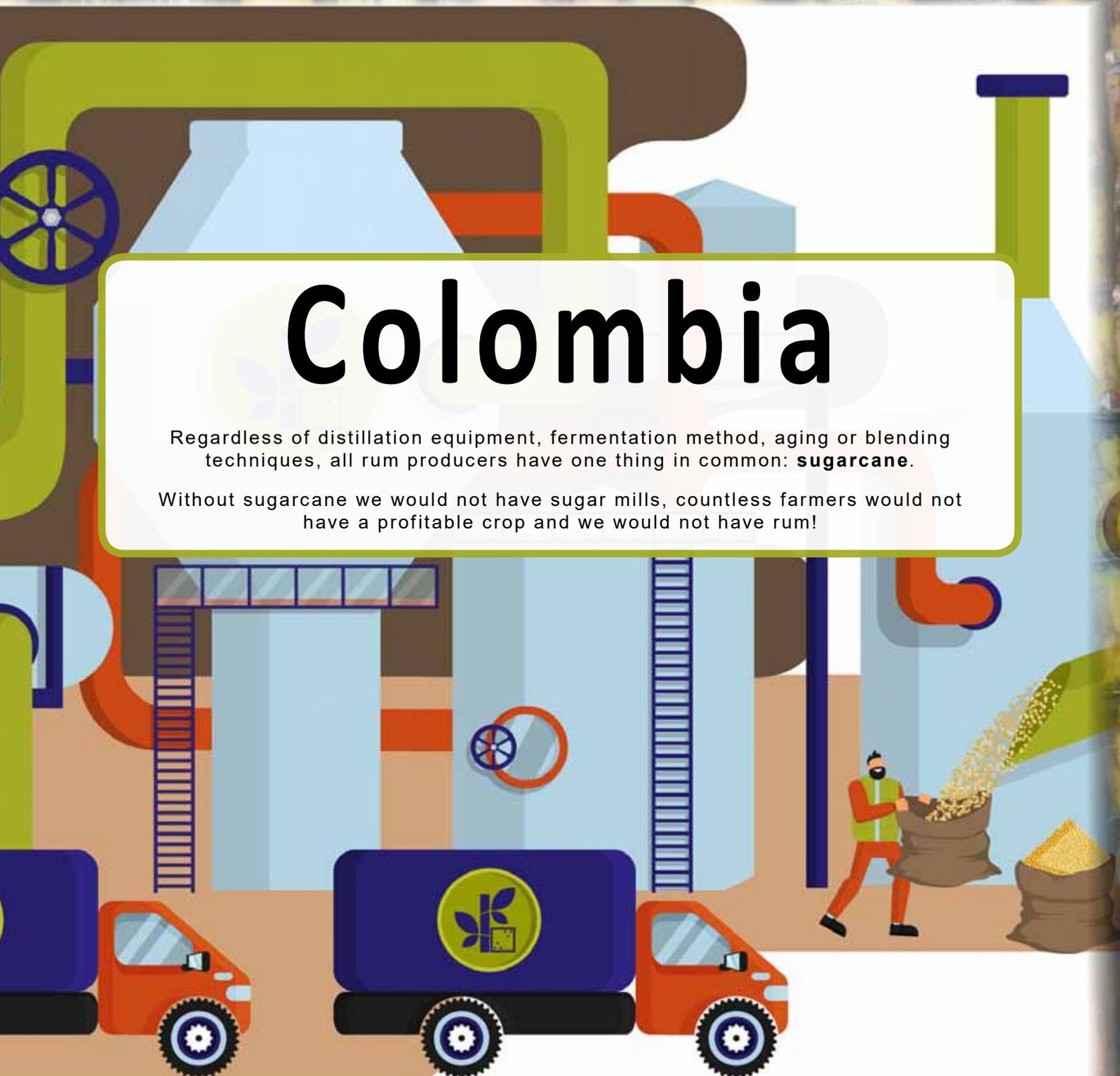
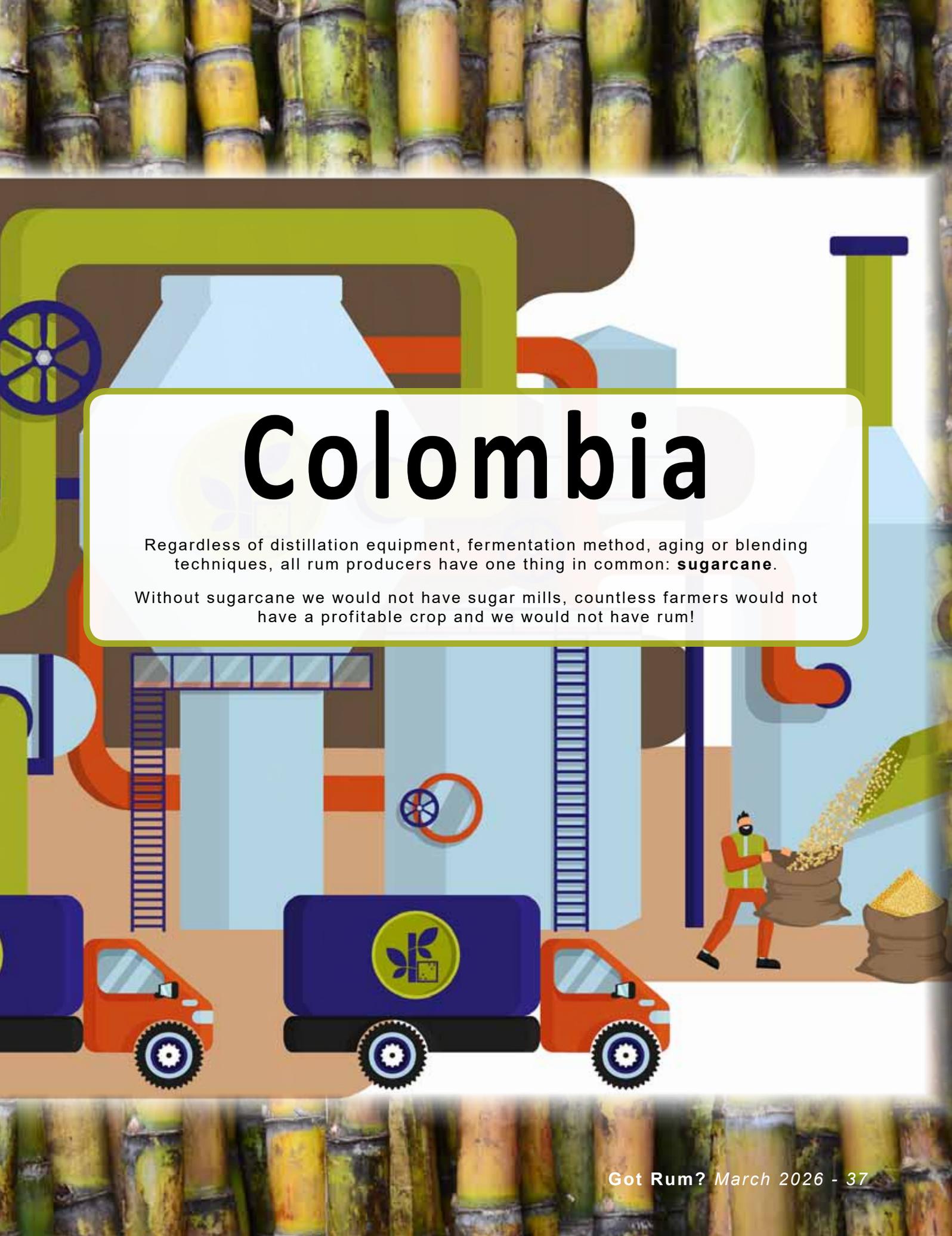


The Sweet Business of Sugar



THE **Rum**
UNIVERSITY





Colombia

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 17, 2025

Report Number: CO2025-0007

Report Name: Sugar Annual

Country: Colombia

Post: Bogota

Report Category: Sugar

Prepared By: Lady Gomez, Agricultural Specialist

Approved By: Mark Rosmann

Report Highlights:

In market year (MY) 2025/2026, FAS Bogota (Post) forecasts Colombia's sugar production to recover to 2.3 million metric tons (MMT) due to improved weather conditions from the weakening of the La Niña phenomenon and expected normal weather patterns, positively impacting sugarcane yields and sucrose content. This recovery follows recent underperformance, especially in MY 2023/2024 when heavy rainfall lowered yields. Colombia's economy is projected to grow by over 2.5 percent in 2025 through 2026, which should support modest improvements in sugar consumption despite the Colombian government's continuing consumer tax on sugar products. Exports are expected to slightly increase owing to higher production, with mostly flat refined sugar imports.

Commodities:

Sugar Cane for Centrifugal

Sugarcane Production

Table 1. Colombia: Sugarcane, Centrifugal, Area in Thousand Hectares and Others, TMT

Sugar Cane for Centrifugal Market Year Begins	2023/2024		2024/2025		2025/2026	
	Sep 2023		Sep 2024		Sep 2025	
	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post
Area Planted (1000 HA)	244	244	245	245	0	240
Area Harvested (1000 HA)	193	193	193	185	0	190
Production (1000 MT)	22000	22000	22200	22500	0	23000
Total Supply (1000 MT)	22000	22000	22200	22500	0	23000
Utilization for Sugar (1000 MT)	17650	17650	18000	18200	0	18700
Utilization for Alcohol (1000 MT)	4350	4350	4200	4300	0	4300
Total Utilization (1000 MT)	22000	22000	22200	22500	0	23000

Note: Virtually no cane is utilized directly for alcohol production. “Utilization for alcohol” in the table includes cane used for seed, feed, and waste. “Utilization for sugar” data includes cane used to produce mill sugar. Forecast for MY 2025/2026; MYs 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 are estimates.

Data source: Post historical data series.

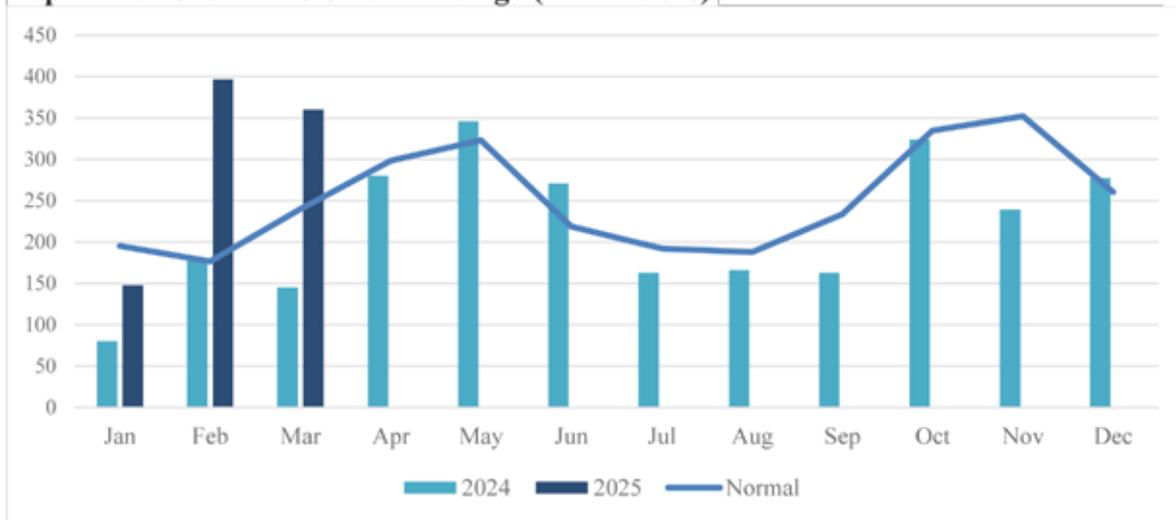
In market year (MY) 2025/2026 (October-September), Colombia’s sugarcane production is expected to recover as weather conditions normalize with a decreasing influence of the La Niña phenomenon. Colombia’s sugarcane producing region experienced above-average rainfall and temperature variability during February and March of calendar year 2025 (Figure 1).¹ Despite these anomalies, the Sugar Cane Research Institution (Cenicaña) forecasts² that rainfall will return to average levels starting in late April to early May 2025.³ Currently, La Niña phenomenon is weakening, with a 75 percent probability of transitioning to neutral conditions starting from April up through June 2025. The expected normalization of weather patterns is anticipated to improve sugarcane yields in the upcoming marketing year.

¹ Unless otherwise stated (e.g., MY) all years are in calendar basis (January-December).

² See: [Seasonal Forecast Bulletin for the Sugarcane Agro-Industrial Sector](#), Cenicaña, March 2025.

³ Rainfall, as opposed to irrigation, is the most important weather parameter for sugarcane production as it directly influences the growth and health of the crop and affect the timing of various agricultural practices such as planting, fertilization, pest control, and harvest.

Figure 1. Colombia: 2024-2025 Monthly Precipitation in Sugarcane Producing Departments with Historical Average (millimeters)



Data Source: USDA Global Agricultural and Disaster Assessment System ([GADAS](#)) Climate Hazards Center InfraRed Precipitation with Station (CHIRPS) Monthly Precipitation dataset. Precipitation data is provided as the average value across a one-month period against historical averages (see *Normal* trend line).

In MY 2024/2025, sugarcane production increased 2.3 percent year-on-year on an estimated harvested area of 185,000 hectares (ha). Despite a decrease in harvested area compared to MY 2023/2024, yields improved owing to drier El Niño weather patterns combined with improved agronomic practices by producers. Sugarcane tonnage per hectare (TCH) gradually increased from 107 TCH at the start of 2024 to 119 TCH by year-end.⁴

The Cauca River Valley maintains an ideal climate allowing multiple harvests during the year and is historically considered as the most productive sugarcane producing region in South America, with average sugarcane yields reaching 130 tons per hectare. The sector faces challenges, including a lack of widespread irrigation systems and the need for farmers to adopt innovative practices to maintain productivity. Due to extreme weather from 2021 to early 2024, including heavy La Niña rains, sugarcane yields remained less than historical averages, and only began to recover in late 2024. In addition, the Colombian sugar sector continues to face issues including longstanding social conflicts that have led to increased insecurity and violence around growing areas.

There are about 240,000 ha of sugarcane planted in the Cauca River Valley⁵ which is nearly all arable land available to be planted in the region. On average, under normal weather conditions, the region harvests about 80 percent of its sugarcane cultivated area, and the rest remains idle as part of a land management strategy based on sugarcane industry decisions. In 2024, 81 percent of sugarcane was machine harvested with the remaining crop harvested by hand. With limited acreage expansion potential, productivity gains depend on favorable weather and the application of improved practices and advanced sugarcane varieties developed by Cenicaña. The lack of

⁴ Source: [Cenicaña's Annual Report 2024](#), Cenicaña, February 2025.

⁵ The Cauca River Valley is in Colombia's southwest territory and consists of five departments: Caldas, Cauca, Risaralda, Quindío, and Valle del Cauca.

sufficient, arable land for broad sugarcane expansion is expected to remain a long-term challenge for the sugar industry.

Sugar Centrifugal

Table 2. Colombia: Centrifugal Sugar (Raw Value Basis) (Thousand Metric Tons [TMT])

Sugar, Centrifugal Market Year Begins Colombia	2023/2024		2024/2025		2025/2026	
	Oct 2023		Oct 2024		Oct 2025	
	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post
Beginning Stocks (1000 MT)	164	164	189	129	0	126
Beet Sugar Production (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cane Sugar Production (1000 MT)	2250	2000	2250	2250	0	2300
Total Sugar Production (1000 MT)	2250	2000	2250	2250	0	2300
Raw Imports (1000 MT)	2	5	10	2	0	5
Refined Imp. (Raw Val) (1000 MT)	295	330	260	160	0	180
Total Imports (1000 MT)	297	335	270	162	0	185
Total Supply (1000 MT)	2711	2499	2709	2541	0	2611
Raw Exports (1000 MT)	155	145	180	150	0	160
Refined Exp. (Raw Val) (1000 MT)	450	420	500	450	0	480
Total Exports (1000 MT)	605	565	680	600	0	640
Human Dom. Consumption (1000 MT)	1912	1800	1840	1810	0	1830
Other Disappearance (1000 MT)	5	5	5	5	0	5
Total Use (1000 MT)	1917	1805	1845	1815	0	1835
Ending Stocks (1000 MT)	189	129	184	126	0	166
Total Distribution (1000 MT)	2711	2499	2709	2541	0	2611

Note: Virtually no centrifugal sugar is utilized for alcohol, feed, or other non-human consumption. All figures in raw value. To convert raw value to refined/crystal white sugar, divide by a factor of 1.07.

Data Source: Post historical data series. Forecast for MY 2025/2026; MYs 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 are estimates.

Production

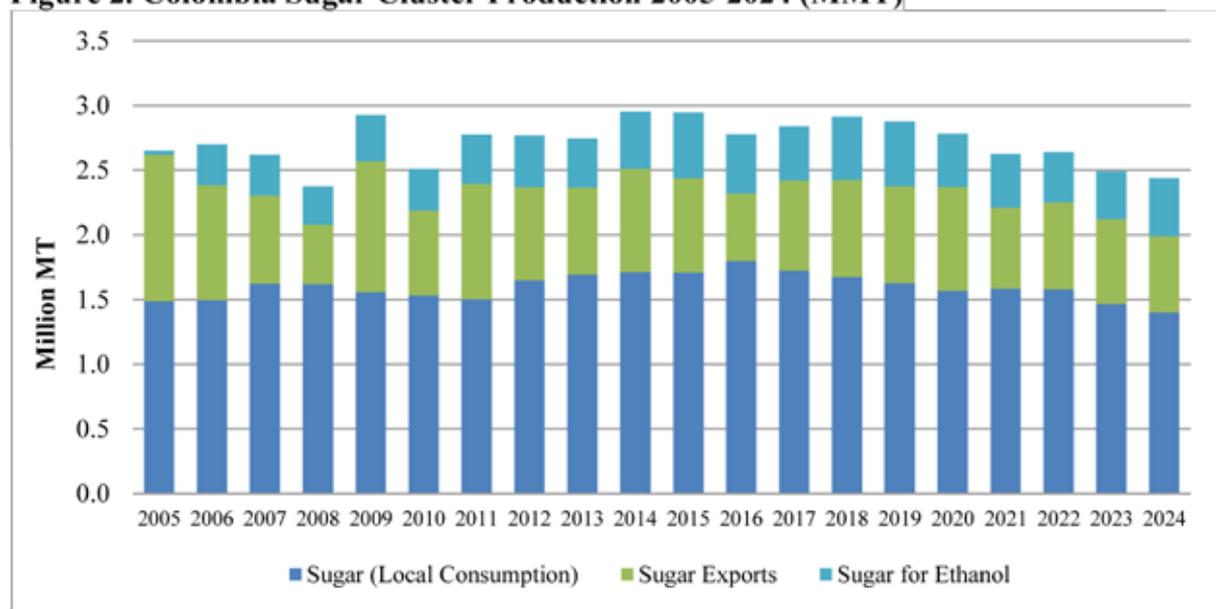
In MY 2024/2025, Colombia's sugar production is forecast to increase by 2 percent year-on-year to 2.3 million metric tons (MMT) raw value basis (RV) and reaching historical highs. This growth is driven by improved sugarcane yields, attributed to favorable agroclimatic conditions that have positively impacted both the quantity of per ha sugarcane harvested and sugar extraction efficiency. According to the Colombian Sugar Producers Association (Asocaña), in January-February 2025, per ha sugar yields have already increased 9.3 percent year-on-year, reflecting a growth in sucrose content recovery. Cenicaña projects that sucrose content will increase to 12.4 percent in 2025, up from 12.08 percent recorded in 2024. Despite projections of declining international sugar prices, local industry anticipates that price levels will remain sufficiently profitable to support sustained production.

The sugar production estimate for the current MY remains unchanged at 2.25 MMT raw value basis. The shift from prolonged rainy seasons to drier El Niño conditions, and then followed by

stable weather, has stabilized sugarcane yields and sucrose content, aligning with historical averages after two years of lower performance. In addition, prolonged, intense precipitation delayed critical sugarcane activities like land preparation, planting, and fertilization.

Colombia’s 13 sugar mills and most of its ethanol facilities (six plants out of seven) are in the Cauca River Valley, which spans across five Colombian departments. Most sugar mills are near ethanol distilleries (or co-located, if owned by the same entity), which simplifies sugarcane diversion. Since 2005, when Colombia first began mass ethanol production, domestic ethanol demand has offset sugar exports by 30-40 percent annually (Figure 2). Ethanol production is growing year-on-year, following increases in sugarcane production. In 2024, ethanol production reached 406 million liters, a 23.5 percent increase year-on-year. Colombia’s sugar industry in the outyear is projected to divert significant volumes of sugarcane for alcohol production, while attempting to keep pace with both refined sugar manufacturing and export demand. With insufficient ethanol production to meet the government’s ten percent ethanol blending mandate (E10), Colombia will continue its heavy reliance on imported ethanol.⁶

Figure 2. Colombia Sugar Cluster Production 2005-2024 (MMT)



Data source: Post historical data series, Asocaña.

Since January 2001, local sugar prices have been subject to the Sugar Price Stabilization Fund (FEPA) (See Policy section). The Colombian government designed FEPA as a tool to protect local producers against international sugar price fluctuations.

Non-Centrifugal Sugar

In 2024, non-centrifugal sugar (or *panela*) production decreased 15 percent year-on-year to 900,000 MT on an estimated 162,400 hectares. The production of sugarcane for *panela* was significantly impacted by increased on-farm costs, particularly labor, in addition to adverse

⁶ This projection comes despite the 2020 countervailing duty against U.S. ethanol See: USDA GAIN [CO2023-0008](#): “Colombia continues to impose duty on U.S. ethanol after CVD Expiry Review.” Published April 10, 2023. In 2024, the United States was the largest ethanol supplier to Colombia.

weather conditions in the first half of 2024, which negatively affected both productivity and harvesting capabilities. Sugarcane for panela is produced throughout Colombia, but predominantly cultivated by smallholder producers in Colombia's highlands, spanning 29 departments, with 80 percent of production concentrated in eight departments.⁷ According to the Panela Producers Association (Fedepanela), there are approximately 18,500 crushing/milling facilities, most of which are small and considered informal.

Panela prices recovered in 2024, averaging \$3,695 Colombian Pesos (COP) per kilogram (kg). As of March 2025, panela prices have continued their upward trend, increasing by 25 percent to COP 4,617 (USD \$0.85)⁸ per kg compared to 2024 prices, primarily due to reduced supply. Rising panela prices and favorable weather conditions may boost panela production in 2025.

Consumption

In MY 2025/2026, sugar consumption is forecast to marginally increase 1 percent from the previous year's revised estimate to 1.83 million metric tons. Consumption levels have been constrained by slow economic growth and the implementation of select taxes on sugar products. Colombia's economic growth is projected to increase over 2.5 percent and would gradually boost sugar demand, especially in the food and beverage industries.⁹ For MY 2024/2025, sugar consumption remains nearly unchanged from last year's revised estimate due to slower economic growth, current tax policies, and changing consumer behavior.

The Colombian government's November 2023 "healthy taxes" has incorporated a progressive tax rate on processed products starting at 10 percent in 2023, increasing to 15 percent in 2024, and 20 percent by 2025. This policy has led to a decrease in food and industrial sugar usage.¹⁰ The beverage industry, largest consumer of sugar in Colombia, is expected to continue increasing its substitution of sugar with alternative sweeteners, which are not subject to the tax. Consumer habits have shifted significantly toward healthier options, increasing demand for low-sugar or sugar-free alternatives, presenting a key market constraint for the sugarcane sector.

To promote responsible sugar consumption, in 2020, Asocaña launched the "*Azúcar con Balance*" (Sugar with Balance) campaign. The initiative aims to provide Colombians with scientifically grounded information on sugar intake using social media. Supported by nutrition professionals, the campaign focuses on public engagement using educational content to encourage informed decision making on consumption habits.

Trade

Colombia's sugar exports for MY 2025/2026 are forecast to reach 640,000 MT RV, a 6.7 percent increase from the previous MY revised estimate. This growth is supported by expected increased cane production. In MY 2024/2025, the revised sugar export estimate is 6.2 percent

⁷ Includes Antioquia, Cundinamarca, Santander, Boyacá, Cauca, Nariño, Tolima, and Huila.

⁸ For purposes of this report, \$1 dollar equals COP 4,274 as of April 7, 2025.

⁹ The Colombian economy will grow 2.6 and 3.4 percent in 2025 and 2026 respectively, according to [Colombia's Central Bank Estimates](#) (Banco de la República) January, 2025.

¹⁰ See: CNN Español, "[This is how the healthy tax works in Colombia, and these are the products it affects.](#)" Published November 2, 2023.

higher than MY 2023/2024 at 600,000 MT, owing to market realities driven by increasing international market demand and a slight recovery in domestic cane production.

Colombia exports sugar to the United States through quotas established by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (CTPA). In fiscal year (FY) 2025 (October-September), the WTO quota for Colombia is set at 25,819 MT raw value; for 2025, the CTPA quota is 59,750 metric tons RV. Colombian exporters typically fully utilize both quotas; however, in FY 2024, some companies were unable to meet their WTO quota allocations due to low sugarcane production. Exporters have shown a preference for fulfilling the CTPA quota, as it permits refined sugar exports, and provides a higher added value compared to raw sugar.

In MY 2023/2024, the United States remained the leading destination for Colombian sugar exports, capturing a 23 percent share of the total market, closely followed by Chile with 20 percent. The European Union accounted for 14 percent of exports, while shipments to Ecuador dropped following significant growth in MY 2022/2023 (Table 3). Of the total sugar exported by Colombia, 74 percent was refined sugar, and the remaining 26 percent was unprocessed, raw sugar.

Table 3. Colombia Sugar Exports MYs MY 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 (RV, MT)

Partner Country	Total Exports (Raw Value)			% Share		
	MY 2021/2022	MY 2022/2023	MY 2023/2024	MY 2021/2022	MY 2022/2023	MY 2023/2024
United States	157,528	149,293	127,700	24	22	23
Chile	113,830	147,393	114,729	17	22	20
EU 28	80,360	101,640	80,766	12	15	14
Ecuador	41,928	77,836	65,876	6	12	12
Haiti	78,320	58,100	44,501	12	9	8
Peru	60,101	50,598	37,389	9	7	7
Others	129,893	91,461	93,698	20	13	16
Total	661,960	676,321	564,659	-	-	-

Data Source: Colombia Customs National Office (DIAN), Trade Data Monitor (TDM).

Note: Data includes all sugar (refined and raw, RV converted).

In MY 2025/2026, sugar imports are forecast at 185,000 MT, 14 percent higher year-on-year from the revised estimate, and driven by an expected recovery in domestic consumption. In the current MY 2024/2025, imports are revised 40 percent lower to 162,000 MT, owing to market realities and the expected increase in local sugar production which prioritizes the domestic market. More than 98 percent of Colombia's sugar imports are refined.¹¹

In MY 2023/2024, Brazil solidified its position as the primary foreign supplier of sugar to Colombia, accounting for 72 percent share of imports. Guatemala ranked as the second-largest supplier of centrifugal sugar, contributing approximately 13 percent of imports (Table 4).

¹¹ Colombia does not typically import raw sugar due to profit margins and domestic industry usage patterns.

According to local industry, Colombia has become one of top countries with the highest import share relative to total consumption.

Table 4. Colombia Sugar Imports - MYs 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 (RV, MT)

Partner Country	Total Imports (Raw Value)			% Share		
	MY 2021/2022	MY 2022/2023	MY 2023/2024	MY 2021/2022	MY 2022/2023	MY 2023/2024
Brazil	9,416	134,388	243,465	4	52	72
Guatemala	46,090	29,801	44,980	21	12	14
Bolivia	87,342	11,270	25,654	39	4	8
Nicaragua	8,371	8,635	10,507	4	3	3
Peru	22,748	37,212	7,089	10	15	2
Others	48,593	34,830	4,574	22	14	1
Total	222,560	256,136	336,269	-	-	-

Data Source: DIAN, TDM.

Note: Data includes all sugar (refined and raw, RV converted).

Stocks

Market year 2025/2026 ending stocks are forecast at 136,000 MT, 8 percent higher against the previous year revised estimate. Ending stocks for MY 2023/2024 are dropped to 126,000 MT as Colombia can produce sugar year-round with minimal risk to supply shortages. There are no Colombian government programs or incentives for sugar mills to manage inventories.

Policy

Sugar Price Stabilization Fund

Colombia's Price Stabilization Fund was established in 1993 through Law 101, General Law of Agricultural Development, and its specific sugar program (FEPA)¹² was enacted through [Decree 569 of 2000](#). The Colombian government created FEPA to maintain price stability and prevent oversupply and low prices in the domestic sugar market. Asocaña has historically administered this fund and continues to manage it. FEPA's board is chaired by the Colombian Minister of Agriculture and includes the Minister of Trade and eleven representatives from the sugarcane industry, including growers and mills.

The FEPA provides incentives for sugar exports by hedging against price differences between domestic and international markets and setting a market-weighted average price (MWAP). Historically, domestic sugar prices have been higher than export prices, except for U.S. export prices under quotas. Milling operations that sell sugar at prices above the MWAP, or typically above the domestic market, contribute a certain amount of the price difference to the Price Stabilization Fund. Conversely, mills that sell sugar below MWAP prices receive compensation via the FEPA. Asocaña conducts a monthly calculation to determine the contribution and compensation values for each sugar mill.¹³

¹² In Spanish: Fondo de Estabilización de Precios del Azúcar.

¹³ Payments made to cover the difference between the MWAP baseline and the contract price.

Andean Price Band System

Colombia utilizes the Andean Price Band System (APBS)¹⁴ as a member of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) to stabilize prices for a select group of sensitive agricultural products, including raw and refined sugar (Table 5). Sugar imports from CAN countries (i.e., Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia) are allowed duty-free entry into Colombia. Similarly, Colombian sugar exports to these countries have zero percent duties, while imports from outside the CAN are subject to a variable duty. The basic customs duty rate on imports of both raw and refined sugar from non-CAN countries is currently 15 percent. The CAN revises the price band, both ceiling and floor, in April of every year. The adjustment is made based on whether a reference price is above, below, or within the ceiling and floor prices. The reference price is adjusted every two weeks.

Table 5: CAN Sugar Floor and Ceiling Prices April 2025-March 2026 (USD/MT)¹⁵

	Floor Price CIF	Ceiling Price CIF
Refined Sugar	\$595	\$683
Raw Sugar	\$476	\$553

Data Source: Resolution 2456, 2024 CAN.

Early April 2025 reference prices for raw (\$437/MT) and refined sugar (\$556/MT) are below the floor prices, resulting in effective import duties of 25 percent for raw and 23 percent for refined sugar.

U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement

Signed in 2012, the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement removed the price band duty for all imports from the United States, including sugar. Starting in 2021, the import tariff-rate quota for glucose, which encompasses high-fructose corn syrup, became unlimited. For 2025, Colombia's sugar export quota under the CTPA is set at 59,750 MT, a quota that is typically fully utilized. The import quota under CTPA increases by 750 MT each year.

Andean Community of Nations and Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)

Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia as CAN members have duty free access to Colombia's sugar market. Colombia maintains a price band system; there is no agreement on the timing of tariff reductions under the Colombia MERCOSUR free trade agreement. Colombia continues to grant trade preferences under bilateral agreements, where MERCOSUR members pay a percentage (88 percent) of the effective duty rate. Colombia's effective duties on Brazilian raw and refined sugar are updated every 15 days, whose variation depends on the behavior of international prices. From April 1-15, 2025, effective duties for Brazilian origin raw and refined sugar to Colombia are 22 percent and 20.24 percent, respectively.

¹⁴ The APBS price stabilization triggers a tariff increase when the international reference price falls below a set floor. The base tariff is reduced when the reference price exceeds the ceiling. If the reference price is within the floor and ceiling, the sugar import duty is 15 percent of the invoice value. Floor and ceiling prices are adjusted annually based on a mathematical calculation through CAN Decision 371.

¹⁵ The CAN reference prices for sugar are calculated based on the biweekly average of daily quotations observed in the referential markets: London No. 5 for refined sugar, and New York No. 11 for raw sugar.



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The History and Science of the Barrel

Lesson 3: Physical Properties of Oak

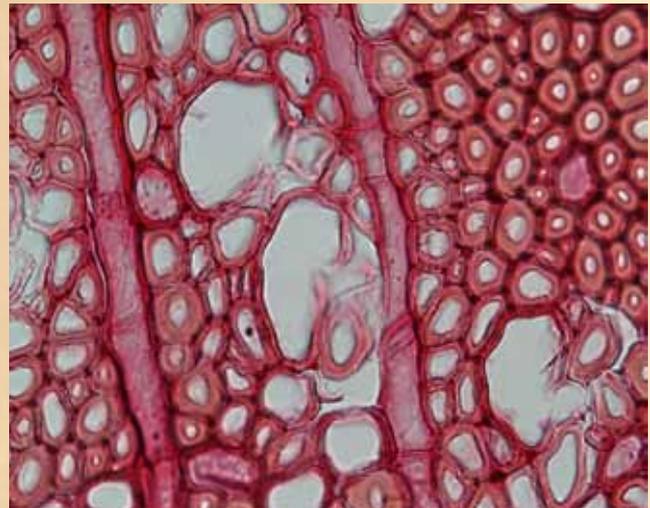
Welcome to Lesson 3 of 12 of the Rum University's latest course! You can find previous lessons of this course by visiting the Archives page at www.GotRum.com. You can also find additional courses and material at the university's official website, www.RumUniversity.com.

Taking a close look at oak

Regardless of the variety, oak wood is formed as cells in a layer called "cambium" are regenerated. The cells produced can be:

- Vessels designed to conduct sap (Xylem)
- Fibers to help support the weight of the tree or
- Storage receptacles (for water, waste, etc.)

Each year's growing season (from Spring through Fall) generates a cambium layer comprised of an arrangement of all three cell types listed above. Together, these annual growth patterns form an annual "growth ring," which is often identifiable by the naked eye.



Electronic microscope view of Transverse xylem section from American oak showing thick-walled fibers. Photo credit: UNLV.

Grain Coarseness

In the U.S.A., the number of annual growth rings per inch determine the coarseness (and quality) of the wood:

- Coarse oak wood contains less than 8 rings per linear inch
- Medium oak wood contains between 9 and 14 rings per linear inch
- Extra-fine oak wood contains more than 14 rings per linear inch



A cross section of an oak tree

1. Bark: outermost layer of the tree, exposed to light and weather
2. Cambium Layer: growth layer where new cells are produced
3. Sapwood: so called because this is living wood through which sap flows
4. Heartwood: the oldest, hardest part of the tree

American vs. French Oak: A Matter of Tylose

Barrels made from French oak (*Quercus pedunculata*) have always been more expensive than their American oak (*Quercus alba*) counterparts, leading (or misleading) people into thinking that the former are better. The reason for the price difference is basic economics:

An average American oak tree will yield twice the number of barrels as a French oak tree of identical size. Why?

As a tree reaches maturity, it undergoes a process known as *duraminisation*, when heartwood is formed. During this transformation, “*parenchymal cells located near the large sap-conductive vessels excrete a membranous protruberance, known as a tylose, which partially blocks the vessels*¹.” It is this obstruction which gives American oak its water-tight characteristic, regardless of how the wood is milled, whereas the absence of tyloses in French oak result in the need to mill the wood in a more restrictive way to preserve its impermeability.

There are other differences between the two oak varieties. We will explore them in more detail in upcoming lessons.

¹ Dr. J. A. Hueso, Tonelería Victoria

CIGAR & RUM PAIRING

by Philip Ili Barake





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

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

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

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

Philip
#GRCigarPairing



Puerto Rico Sour Twist

Some time ago I was speaking with my friend Roberto Berdecia, a renowned Puerto Rican bartender, about how adding a few "twists" to some cocktails can result in new variations that are well-received by consumers. With this in mind, I tried making some changes to the classic Sour served here in Chile, the ubiquitous Pisco Sour.

This is a classic drink that is easily found in Chile and in Peru and, for as long as the drink has been around, so has the fight about which country makes the best one and in which country was Pisco first created. The truth is that both Piscos are aromatically distinct, but they are also manufactured in similar ways, both using grapes. A classic Pisco Sour, regardless of which country it is from, is very hard to pair with a cigar. Much depends, of course, on when we plan to smoke and if we introduce any twists to the recipe.

Here in Chile, there is a trend among bartenders to decline preparing Piña Coladas, something that I believe is silly, considering that it too is a classic cocktail. Perhaps the disdain for it arises from the drink's simplicity, but if I was a bartender and a customer asked me for a Piña Colada, rather than declining or doing it half-heartedly, I would set out to make the absolute best Piña Colada for my customer!

And this is precisely what Roberto and I were talking about. I mentioned to him that at home, as an aperitif, I often make a Sour that is similar to a Piña Colada, changing some of the ingredients. Since the starting point is a Sour, it obviously needs Pisco, but I reduce the amount and also incorporate Coconut Rum. The same approach applies to the simple syrup: I reduced the typical amount so that I could add sweetened condensed milk. The result is very smooth and reminiscent of a Piña Colada.



Photos credit: @Cigarili



Photo credit: @Cigarili

When we spoke, Roberto was posting online about a Piña Colada made with coffee and my comments were about the Pisco Sour variant. Regarding the coffee, I remembered the book “The Flavor Bible” from Karen Page Andrew Dornenburg, in which she writes that the flavor of mango combines well with many others, one of them being coffee, and this inspired me to try it with several recipes.

The final recipe ended up being as follows:

- 2 ½ oz. Pisco Malpaso 35 (if you can’t find this one, used one that is un-aged)
- ½ oz. Bacardi Mango
- 1 oz. Lime Juice
- 1 ¼ oz. Simple Syrup
- ¼ oz. Sweet Condensed Milk
- ¼ oz. Coffee Liqueur

If you don’t have coffee liqueur, you can substitute with an espresso, but you’ll need to reduce the amount of pisco a bit, to maintain the aromatic balance from the other ingredients.

The cocktail is mixed in a shaker filled with large ice cubes. It is up to you if you want to double strain it, but if you are using an espresso, you’ll need the foam at the end. Now that the cocktail is ready, it is time to decide which cigar could accompany it and the options are not as varied as you’d expect: it is a fresh cocktail, on the citric

side, so it presents its challenges. For this reason, I selected a “Purito,” a cigar format that is convenient and easy to reach for, usually filled with chopped tobacco, with a medium body and very easy to smoke. Even if the intensity does not come across as medium at the start, it will certainly increase as the smoking progresses.

The cocktail is just as I expected: a sour with unmistakable tropical notes and coffee. I say “tropical” because the mango and sweet condensed milk immediately transport your mind to the land of Piña Coladas.

Cocktail twists, such as this one, are very easy to make, and the results are great. More than aiming for a perfect new cocktail, the goal is to take us on a magical journey, in this case to the coast of Puerto Rico, where I wish I could be now enjoying the warm weather and a cool cocktail, instead of being here surrounded by cold climate!

I hope that you can find these or similar ingredients and that you are able to recreate this pairing at home. It’ll be like going on vacation to your favorite destination. Let me know if you do and if you add additional twists to your recipe.

Philip Ili Barake
#GRCigarPairing




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