

# Got Rum?®

NOVEMBER 2023

FROM THE GRASS TO YOUR GLASS, SINCE 2001!

**COOKING WITH RUM - ANGEL'S SHARE - CIGAR & RUM  
UNTIL THE BITTER END - RUM IN THE NEWS  
THE IMBIBER'S ALMANAC - THE RUM UNIVERSITY®  
THE SWEET BUSINESS OF SUGAR**



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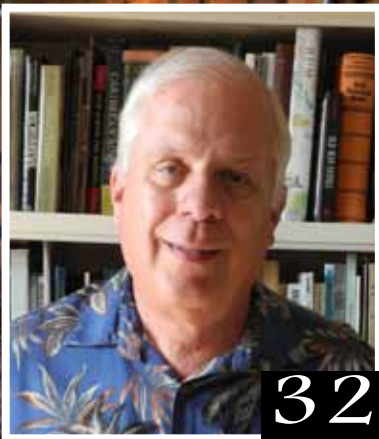


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# Got Rum?®

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FRONT COVER: Falling in Love With Fall  
INSIDE SPREAD: Rise and Shine in the Fall

# FROM THE EDITOR

## *Falling Into Place*

Fall is a time when the order of things changes around us: birds start to migrate, the tree leaves fall to the ground, the days grow shorter, etc. This year's plans should be coming to fruition and all the preparations for next year should be underway.

For us at the Rum Runner Press group of companies (**The Rum University**, **"Got Rum?" Magazine** and **Rum Central**), 2023 has been our most challenging one, becoming another year of consecutive, record-breaking growth, culminating in the opening of our largest Distilled Spirits Plant to date. Yet, as we see all our plans coming to fruition, we constantly remind ourselves that none of these things would be possible without an equally successful portfolio of clients, and our client's success would be impossible without a growing rum market.

American poet Margaret Elizabeth Sangster wrote:

*"Spring is beautiful, and summer is perfect for vacations, but autumn brings a longing to get away from the unreal things of life, out into the forest at night with a campfire and the rustling leaves."*

Her words perfectly capture the need to celebrate fall in all its glory, not just acknowledge its presence and move on. Acknowledging the beauty of fall is a way of recognizing the inevitability of life, hopefully within the context of proper planning: "plan for fall so that you may be well prepared to enjoy it."



If you haven't already accomplished all your goals for 2023, you may still have time to work on them. If, on the other hand, you don't have enough time to accomplish them, then energize yourself as you contemplate and enjoy the turning and falling leaves.

December will be here before we know it, so let's all make sure we are prepared and our plans fall into place so that we all can make 2023 our best year yet!

Cheers!

Luis Ayala, *Editor and Publisher*

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

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

# THE ANGEL'S SHARE

by Paul Senft



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

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

Cheers!

## Kuleana Hokulei Rum

Kuleana Rum Works was founded in 2013 on the island of Hawai'i with the mission of creating rums and celebrating the richness of Hawaiian culture. The company grows 40 varieties of heirloom sugarcane on their farm in Kohala and uses it to make fresh juice for their fermentation process. The company also focuses on operating with zero waste, using crushed cane for mulch, compost, and cattle feed, and utilizing drip irrigation from their solar powered well. In 2018, the company launched three products, and in 2022, it released Hokulei. The rum is a blend of seven rums aged between 18 months and 18 years. These molasses-based rums were sourced from Panama, Nicaragua, Barbados, and Venezuela. Then they blended these rums with one of their rums made from sugarcane juice, aged 18 months in ex-Cognac barrels, and a 15 year aged rum from Barbados. Then, to add an additional layer to the flavor profile, they added rum from Trinidad. The final blend is bottled at 46% ABV at the company's facility. The company does not use any additives or coloring when making their products.

### Appearance

The short-necked 750 ml bottle has a single label that wraps around the bottle and is filled with information about the product. Each label also notes the batch and bottle number of the product. In this case, the bottle is from batch number 12 and is bottle 312. A clear wrap secures the wooden-capped, synthetic cork to the bottle, with the words Respect+Responsibility around the cap and the logo on top.

In the bottle and glass, the rum holds a golden amber color. Swirling the liquid creates a thin ring around the tasting glass that slowly thickens and releases a couple of waves of thick legs down the side. It takes quite some time for the ring to evaporate, leaving beads and residue in its wake.

### Nose

The aroma of the rum leads with strong fruit notes accompanying the initial rush of alcohol. As the rum settled, I discovered the fruit notes to be fresh cut bananas, grilled pineapple, raisins, and lime. Followed by an interesting blend of baking spices and vanilla rounding out the nosing experience.

### Palate

The first sip of the rum delivered a bit of heat as the proof of the rum conditioned the palate with a rush of Madagascar vanilla. The texture of the liquid changes with every sip from smooth to dense as different flavors manifest. The fruit flavors from the aroma are present, with the added twist of passion fruit and sweet apples in the mix. The citrus notes manifest as lime zest on the palate, with a bit of saltiness coming into play. As the toasted oak char notes form, there is an earthy, mineral rich undertone that is quickly dominated by nutmeg and clove notes. It is these notes that settle into a long, dry finish.

### Review

This was my first time trying a rum from Kuleana Rum Works, and I thought as a blend it was quite interesting. From the unique texture of rum to the complexity of the flavor profile, there was a lot to unpack during the evaluation process. There are quite a few dominant flavors that are enhanced by the underlying notes. Engineered to be a sipping rum, the company achieved this goal with this proprietary blend, which made me want to try the other products in their rum line that were produced solely with Hawaiian sugarcane. I will make sure to pick up the other rums in their line to evaluate in the future. The Hokulei blend is an easy purchase for anyone who enjoys sipping and savoring a complex rum that has a unique place in today's market.



www.kuleanarum.com

# THE ANGEL'S SHARE

by Paul Senft

## Bayou XO Mardi Gras

Bayou rum is produced by the Louisiana Spirits Company, LLC, which is based in Lacassine, Louisiana. The company uses a blend of sugarcane juice and molasses to create their rums using their copper pot stills. For their Bayou XO Mardi Gras rum, they age the rum for five years in used Bourbon barrels and one additional year in Spanish Perdro Ximenez sherry casks. The rum is blended to 40% ABV and hand-bottled at their facility. For a limited time, this product has been packaged with a New Orleans Saints themed box to commemorate being the official rum of the team for a second year in a row.

### Appearance

The rum is presented in a custom 750 ml bottle design with "XO" embossed below the neck. The top of the bottle cap has a multi color bead with the words "Bayou Mardi Gras Reserve Rum" around the top. The cap secures a synthetic cork with the word Bayou on the side.

In the bottle and glass, the rum has a dark mahogany color. Swirling the liquid created a medium band that released one wave of fast-moving legs and then proceeded to release two more waves of slower-denser legs before quickly evaporating, leaving a ring of beads around the glass.

### Nose

The aroma of the rum begins with a floral vanilla flower note, followed by notes of peach, prune, and dried figs. After the liquid rested for a moment, I discovered fresh-cut leather, cinnamon, and light charred oak, punctuated by sweet molasses.

### Palate

The first sip of the rum conditions the tongue with the rush of alcohol, delivering notes of cooked cobbler peaches, lightly astringent bitter orange peel, tart berries, and prunes. After the fruit notes pass, the charred oak takes over midpalate with a pop of black pepper and toasted almonds. As the finish forms, there is a light honey note that briefly manifests as the flavor profile transitions into a swirl of sweet sherry flavors. These flavors dance and merge, creating a long, dry finish.

### Review

I have watched Bayou Rum grow as a brand since its launch in 2013 and have noted their hits and misses over the past decade. I enjoyed their Bayou XO Mardi Gras rum from the aroma to the finish. I was pleasantly surprised by how well rounded the flavor profile was with the strong fruit flavors and wood notes. By design, this rum is engineered to be enjoyed neat, but I believe it would be quite good in certain classic cocktail recipes, such as an Old Fashioned or Floridita cocktail, where the peach and citrus notes would influence the drink. One thing I would note is that while the influence of the sherry cask finish was present, mainly as a prune note in the core profile, it never dominated until the end of the flavor experience, delivering that sweet, dry finish. Of late, I have noticed some spirits with sherry cask finishes that were completely dominant and destroyed the flavor of the core spirit, leading to a disappointing experience. Therefore, I was a tad relieved that the blenders prevented that from happening, delivering a quality flavor experience that consumers would enjoy.





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# COOKING WITH RUM

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

by Chef Susan Whitley



# Rum Glazed Turkey

## Ingredients for Chestnut/Apple Stuffing:

- 4 Tbsp. Butter, plus 12 tablespoons melted
- 1 C. Onion, diced
- 1/2 C. Carrots, diced
- 1/2 C. Celery, diced
- 2 Tbsp. Fresh Parsley Leaves, chopped
- 1 tsp. Fresh Sage Leaves, chopped
- 8 oz. Chestnuts, roasted, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 2 Apples, peeled cored and diced
- 1/2 C. Dried Cranberries
- 1 C. Sauteed Mushrooms
- 1 1/2 lbs. Sourdough Bread, crusts removed, cut into 1-inch cubes and toasted
- 2 Eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 C. Chicken Stock
- Salt and Ground Black Pepper to taste

## Ingredients for Turkey:

- 1 (22-pound) Turkey, giblets removed, rinsed well inside and out, patted dry
- 2 Sticks Butter, softened, divided
- 2 1/2 C. Brown Sugar, divided
- 1/2 tsp. Ground Cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. Ground Nutmeg
- 3/4 C. Dark Rum
- Salt and Ground Black Pepper to taste

## Special equipment:

- 2 large roasting pans with handles and V-racks Instant-read thermometer 2 (2-quart) casserole dishes Extra-large mixing bowl

## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, melt 4 tablespoons of butter. Add onions, carrots and celery and sauté until tender. Transfer to a large mixing bowl and toss with parsley, sage, chestnuts, apples, dried cranberries, mushrooms and bread. Add the eggs, chicken stock, remaining 12 tablespoons of melted butter, salt and pepper and toss again. Note: If the stuffing is too dry (should not be saturated or soggy) add a bit more stock.
3. Place the turkey on a rack in a roasting pan. Rub the cavity opening with salt and pepper. With your fingers, carefully separate as much of



the turkey's skin from the breast, avoid puncturing any holes in the skin as you go.

4. In a small mixing bowl stir together 8 tablespoons of the softened butter with 1 cup of the brown sugar. Smear about half of the softened butter and sugar mixture over the breast under the skin. Rub the remaining butter and sugar mixture all over the turkey.
5. Loosely stuff the turkey with the cooled chestnut/apple stuffing. If there is extra stuffing bake it in a buttered baking dish next to the turkey in the oven.
6. Roast the stuffed turkey about 3 ½ hours, basting often during the last hour of cooking with the buttered rum glaze, or until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the turkey leg registers 155°F (it will continue cooking for another 20 minutes or so out of the oven). If the turkey skin starts to get too dark, tent it with foil while it roasts.
7. While turkey is cooking, in a small saucepan combine remaining 8 tablespoons of the butter with 1 cup of the brown sugar, ground cinnamon, freshly ground nutmeg, dark rum and a little salt and pepper. Bring to a boil then lower and simmer for 10 minutes until slightly thickened and syrup-like, stirring often.
8. Transfer the turkey to a carving board to rest and loosely tent with foil and allow to cool. Brush the outside of the turkey with rum-syrup mixture to get a glazed look.

Photo credit: foodnetwork.com

# The IMBIBER'S Almanac

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

The Imbiber's Almanac - The Rum University®

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

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# The IMBIBER'S Almanac

## NOVEMBER

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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

Here are a few of them!

Write to us at [info@gotrum.com](mailto:info@gotrum.com)  
if we missed any!

**NOV 8 National Harvey Wallbanger Day**

**NOV 12 National Happy Hour Day**

**NOV 18 National Cider Day**

**NOV 19 Australian Gin Day**

**NOV 19 Beaujolais Nouveau Day**





# The IMBIBER'S Almanac

Featured Cocktail:  
Rum Cider Cocktail  
(November 18th)

## Ingredients

- Crushed Ice
- 4 Oz. Aged Rum
- 8 Oz. Apple Cider
- 4 Dashes Orange Bitters
- 2 Oz. Triple Sec Simple Syrup
- Ginger beer to top (I strongly advice using Fever-Tree brand. The ginger is intense)
- Apple slices to garnish

## Instructions

1. Combine the rum, apple cider, orange bitters, and triple sec in a cocktail shaker over ice. Shake vigorously until frosted.
2. Fill the serving glasses with cubed or crushed ice.
3. Optional - rim the glasses with sugar/ cinnamon mixture.
4. Strain the rum cider cocktail into the glasses halfway up (about 7.oz). Top with ginger beer.
5. Garnish with apple slices, cinnamon sticks and star anise.
6. Serve and enjoy!

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

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

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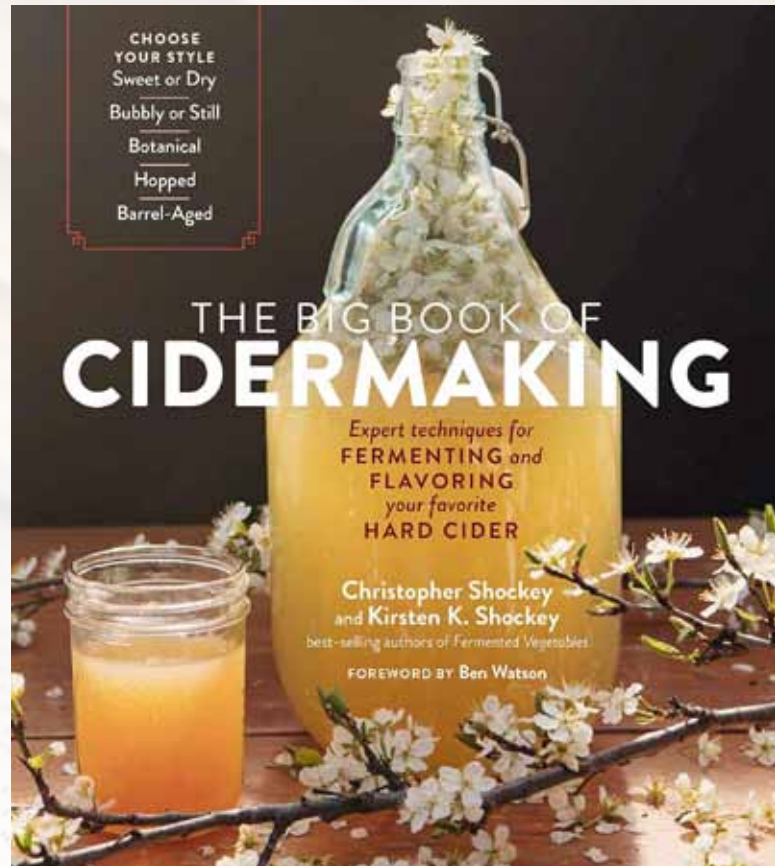
# The Big Book of Cidermaking: Expert Techniques for Fermenting and Flavoring Your Favorite Hard Cider

by Christopher Shockey and Kirsten K. Shockey

(Publisher's Review) Best-selling authors and acclaimed fermentation teachers Christopher Shockey and Kirsten K. Shockey turn their expertise to the world of fermented beverages in the most comprehensive guide to home cidermaking available. With expert advice and clear, step-by-step instructions, *The Big Book of Cidermaking* equips readers with the skills they need to make the cider they want: sweet, dry, fruity, farmhouse-style, hopped, barrel-aged, or fortified. The Shockeys' years of experience cultivating an orchard and their experiments in producing their own ciders have led them to a master formula for cidermaking success, whether starting with apples fresh from the tree or working with store-bought juice. They explore in-depth the different phases of fermentation and the entire spectrum of complex flavor and style possibilities, with cider recipes ranging from cornelian cherry to ginger, and styles including New England, Spanish, and late-season ciders. For those invested in making use of every part of the apple, there's even a recipe for vinegar made from the skins and cores leftover after pressing. This thorough, thoughtful handbook is an empowering guide for every cidermaker, from the beginner seeking foundational techniques and tips to the intermediate cider crafter who wants to expand their skills.

## About the authors

Christopher Shockey and Kirsten K. Shockey are the coauthors of *Miso, Tempeh, Natto & Other Tasty Ferments*, *Fiery Ferments*, and the best-selling *Fermented Vegetables*. Christopher has years of experience producing ciders from



their mountain homestead orchard and is a trained cider maker. The Shockeys got their start fermenting foods more than twenty years ago on their 40-acre hillside smallholding, which grew into their organic food company. When they realized their passion was for the process, they chose to focus on teaching fermentation arts to others. They teach worldwide and host workshops on their homestead in southern Oregon.

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# Until The BITTER END

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

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# Until The BITTER END

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

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

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

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

## What does the word “Bitter” mean?

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

## How Does “Bitter” Actually Taste?

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

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

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

### **Bitter Foods**

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Until The BITTER END

Featured Ingredient:  
**Lavender**

## Scientific Genus: *Lavandula*

*Lavandula* is a genus of 47 known species of flowering plants in the mint family, *Lamiaceae*. It is native to the Old World and is found in Cape Verde and the Canary Islands, and from Europe across to northern and eastern Africa, the Mediterranean, southwest Asia to India.

Many members of the genus are cultivated extensively in temperate climates as ornamental plants for garden and landscape use, for use as culinary herbs, and also commercially for the extraction of essential oils. Lavender is used in traditional medicine and as an ingredient in cosmetics.

Leaf shape is diverse across the genus. They are simple in some commonly cultivated species; in other species, they are pinnately toothed, or pinnate, sometimes multiple pinnate and dissected. In most species, the leaves are covered in fine hairs or indumentum, which normally contain essential oils. Flowers are contained in whorls, held on spikes rising above the foliage, the spikes being branched in some species. Some species produce colored bracts at the tips of the inflorescences. The flowers may be blue, violet, or lilac in the wild species, occasionally blackish purple or yellowish. The sepal calyx is tubular. The corolla is also tubular, usually with five lobes (the upper lip often cleft, and the lower lip has two clefts).

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



## Did You Know That . . .

- The ancient Egyptians made use of lavender during their mummification process, embalming the corpse with perfume.
- The ancient Greeks, on the other hand, used lavender to treat insomnia and ease back pain.
- During the Bubonic Plague in the 17th century, lavender was used as a remedy to ward off potential disease.
- Lavender is actually quite the effective bug repellent! It can protect other plants from certain pests and creepy crawlers as well.
- This fragrant plant can thrive pretty well on neglect, especially in any poor soil conditions.
- When it comes to plant symbolism, lavender represents purity, devotion, serenity, grace, and calmness.
- Queen Victoria was also a huge fan of lavender. She made sure that all of her furniture was cleaned with a lavender-based solution, and her drink of choice was lavender-infused tea to help ease her stomach.

(Source: <https://bouqs.com>)



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# Until The BITTER END

## Featured Bitters Recipe: Lavender Bitters

### Ingredients:

- 1 C. Neutral (low-congener) Rum or Grain Alcohol, 100-Proof or higher
- 2 Tbsp. Red Vermouth
- 2 Tbsp. Simple Syrup
- 2 Tbsps. Culinary Dried Lavender
- 2 Tbsps. Dried Chamomile Flowers
- 2 Tbsps. Dried Rose Petals
- 1 tsp. Dried Hibiscus
- 1 tsp. Dried Burdock Root
- 1/2 tsp. Dried Dandelion Leaf
- 1/2 tsp. Dried Wild Cherry Bark
- 1 Tbsp. Dried Elderflower (optional)
- 1 tsp. Dried Hyssop Leaf (optional)
- 4 or 5 Fresh Edible Flowers (optional)

### Directions:

1. Put the fresh and dried flowers in one infusion jar and the roots and bark in another. Split the liquor, vermouth, rum, and simple syrup evenly between the two jars. Let the softer ingredients infuse for two to four days, and the firmer ingredients infuse for four to six days.
2. Shake each sealed jar once daily to ensure successful infusion. When the scents smell great but aren't overpowering, you're ready to filter out the solid ingredients. Combine the

tinctured liquids, shake the bottle, and let it sit for a few hours to a day. Test the flavor in a drink or with a few drops on a spoon. Add a little extra simple syrup if desired, otherwise, place in a dropper bottle and store your bitters.

3. Remember to perform periodic recipe costing with bitters, too. The ingredients necessary for some recipes can be expensive, so it's important to run a budget before introducing tons of new drink options on your menu.



# RUM IN THE NEWS

by Mike Kunetka



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

## MOUNT GAY

23 | 01 | Bn\_Qa is the somewhat cryptic name for the first release in Mount Gay's Single Estate Series. As the name would imply, this is rum made from sugarcane grown on Mount Gay's own cane fields. This project has been in development since 2015, when Rémy Cointreau, Mount Gay's parent company, bought over 300 acres of the old Mount Gay Estate. This first release is a blend of pot still rums made from the 2016 and 2017 harvests. The 883 tons of cane harvested in 2016 resulted in 79 tons of Grade A molasses; the 1751 tons harvested in 2017 delivered 136 tons of molasses. The molasses had an average sugar content of 72%. Farm Supervisor, Kevin Cozier, described the first harvest: "On the first day of the harvest at Mount Gay, the excitement could be felt by all involved. Harvester operators, tractor drivers, employees from the distillery...we were all very happy to just be there on the Mount Gay Estate and to be a part of History. And it couldn't have been more perfect. The weather was great and the harvest proceeded as planned. I feel proud to have operated the harvester at that time, as it means that I too had a part to play in making the exceptional rum that Mount Gay is known for." This company pride was shared by all involved. Sustainability Manager, Jacklyn Broomes, added "As a child, I was always fascinated



by the use of local produce to make little treats like tamarind balls and Bajan cherry juice as it made them seem all the more special. So today, I consider it an absolute honor to be managing the Mount Gay Estate to produce our own sugarcane and molasses and of course, our very own rum from soil to sip. The pride is palpable and it is my hope that this will be felt in every bottle of our Single Estate Rum.” Using their proprietary Mount Gay yeast, fermentation took nine days, compared to their standard time of four days. Trudiann Branker, Master Blender, said ‘Due to long fermentation length we went into a secondary fermentation, which provided a really distinctive flavor, giving specific Barbadian notes that we don’t normally encounter in our rums, like pineapple or guava. You really get the fruitier side of the congeners appearing.” Using ex-bourbon American oak barrels, the 2016 vintage was aged for six years and the 2017 was aged for five years. Brank explained: “This blend for Single Estate Series really comes from blending different vintages together to give an expression of what I want to present for this year. We understand what maturation in Barbados does add to our rum and how else to honor this molasses, how else to honor this process, but to let that happen. When you look at this bottle, you see my signature though what you don’t see is the fingerprints of everybody that works at Mount Gay.” While most of Mount Gay’s rums are bottled at 40 to 43% ABV, 23 | 01 | Bn\_Qa is bottled at 55% ABV. Branker told Forbes Magazine “The ABV journey is one that I don’t take lightly,” Branker notes. “I’m always very keen on what strength to express an edition at, because it makes a difference in how it’s perceived. For me, 55% was really where I think the essence of the blend started to shine more. It’s where you were able to kind of pick up the discrete [flavor] notes.” This first release consisted of 24 casks, with 1,200 bottles going to the United States. <https://www.mountgayrum.com/>

## BACARDI

Bacardi recently celebrated the opening of its new Combined Heat & Power (CHP) system in Puerto Rico which will cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of the iconic BACARDÍ rum brand in half. Bacardi marked the opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the world’s largest premium rum distillery located in Cataño, Puerto Rico. The new CHP system replaces heavy fuel oil with propane gas which shifts the site to even cleaner energy. The system will generate 100% of the energy used at the campus including the distillery, offices and the Casa BACARDÍ visitor center. Edwin Zayas, Vice President of Operations for Bacardi Corporation in Puerto Rico, said “At Bacardi, we are committed to cutting our GHG emissions by reducing our energy consumption and switching to the most sustainable form of energy where we make our beloved brands. We are continuously exploring ways in which we can take more positive steps towards our ultimate goal of Net Zero across our sites. We are proud of the work we are doing in Puerto Rico, and across the globe, to be greener and cleaner with our energy.” [www.bacardilimited.com](http://www.bacardilimited.com)

## SANTA TERESA

Santa Teresa announced the launch of Santa Teresa 1796 Speyside Cask Whisky Finish. This limited-edition rum finished in Speyside whisky casks, masterfully curated by Maestra Ronera, Nancy Duarte, marks the brand’s inaugural release within the exclusive triple-aged Solera Rum series, Santa Teresa 1796. With its captivating red-amber hue and bold notes of leather, damp smoke, dry spice, and wood, it serves as an exquisite addition for whisky connoisseurs and those seeking a new and elegant experience. Inspired by both Venezuela and the Scottish Highlands, Santa Teresa 1796 Speyside Whisky Cask Finish has been crafted using a rare 13-month finishing process in casks previously used for Speyside Whisky. This distinctive approach sets it apart as one of the world’s only rums to be made this way. Its extended maturation, in conjunction with Santa Teresa 1796’s signature Solera Method, renowned for its use in sherry production, results in a drier, more balanced flavor. As the original cask is never emptied, this process ensures that every bottle carries echoes of the very first 1796 cask. Ms. Duarte told Chilled Magazine “Santa Teresa is excited to launch its first Limited-Edition Cask Finish Series. Santa Teresa 1796 Speyside Cask Finish is an expression of our flagship Santa Teresa 1796 rum in which the rum undergoes an additional finishing process for 13 more months in casks that previously held whisky from the Speyside region of Scotland. This is in addition to the unique triple-aged solera process employed to produce Santa Teresa 1796, meaning that the Speyside Cask Finish expression passes through four distinct types of oak barrels before being bottled. With Santa Teresa 1796 Speyside not only do we attract a new generation of drinkers, but we open a new chapter for our Super Premium rum, Santa Teresa 1796.” <https://www.santateresarum.com/>

## DIPLOMATICO

Diplomático has released 2007 Single Vintage, an extraordinary time capsule of flavor made with the finest rum reserves. Since first being released in 1997, only seven additional vintages were produced in limited quantities until this latest 2007 edition, now available in the United States. Diplomático Single Vintage is crafted from a careful selection of rum reserves that have been matured in a unique way. These exceptional rums have been aged in ex-bourbon and ex-whiskey casks with some rums finished in ex-sherry casks for additional complexity. The base for this exceptional spirit is sugar cane molasses, and through this meticulous process, subtle differences emerge from year to year influenced by its interaction with different environmental conditions. “Diplomático Single Vintage 2007 is a testament to the artistry of rum-making. Serve it neat to unlock its intricate flavors or elevate your experience by pairing it with your favorite desserts, zesty citrus, or the perfect garnish of canapés or grapes,” explains Maestro Ronero Nelson Hernandez. “Each sip is a voyage through taste, where the evolution of the spirit mirrors the uniqueness of this exceptional rum.” <https://www.rondiplomatico.com/>

## RENEGADE CANE RUM

Renegade describes their new ÉTUDES: OLD BACOLET as a study of rum terroir through the lens of their small-batch column stills. They chose the robust spirit derived from Old Bacolet, a Single Farm Origin that produces one of their fullest-bodied, most aromatic distillates. Étude is a micro-origin rum made from cane grown on single field of cane. It comes from the preternaturally flat terroir they call Silk Cotton Tree, which feels the force of the south coast's Atlantic winds, and is matured in the Caribbean a combination of the finest French and American oak. The rum offers vivid, fresh citrus fruit and bright spices, which carry over notes of silky, indulgent vanilla custard, buoyed by an unctuous spirit texture. On the southern coast, protected from the full force of The Atlantic Trade Winds, Old Bacolet was one of the first areas to be cultivated by the French. A flat flood plain between two small rivers, these alluvial soils, Plains Clay Loam & Woburn Clay, and a high-water table produce lush cane. For this rum Renegade harvested the quick growing variety they call Lodger from Theo's field, which stands on the terroir known as Silk Cotton Tree. Études: Old Bacolet was just awarded 89 points from Serge Valentin of Whiskyfun, who said of it: "... enthusiasts often find rums that have been through column stills a bit thin, but that's far from the case here. This is another excellent Renegade." <https://renegaderum.com/>

## PEPE MARGO DISTILLERY

Aruba has a long rum history, but it usually involved local bottlings of bulk rums from other islands. Founder Jonathan Harms saw the need for the island to boast its own premium, locally-made spirit. His Nautical Rum is made from molasses from South America, fermented with a high-ester yeast and distilled in a German copper column still. Pepe Margo Distillery is located in a historic house in Aruba, built in downtown Oranjestad, circa 1900. At one time it was home to Catarina Margarita (Margo) Arends, who gained recognition for her culinary talents, earning endearing nicknames like "Tan (Papiamento for aunt) Margo" or "Pepe (Papiamento for godmother) Margo" from the community. Harms felt it was only fitting to name the distillery after her. <https://pepemargodistillery.com/>

## COSTCO BARREL AGED RUM

I always make a point of checking out the wine and spirits section during my monthly visits to Costco. I enjoy seeing the colorful Tequila bottles in the high-end glass cases. I have even seen some Foursquare rum bottles in those cases. Over the years I have noticed that Costco has started to private label their own spirits. I have seen Kirkland Irish Whiskey, several Kirkland single malts, Kirkland Canadian Whiskey, Kirkland Vodka and even a Kirkland Spiced Rum. This month I was surprised to see Kirkland's Barrel Aged Rum, a 15 year old rum from Panama. It

is made for Costco by Consorcio Licorero Nacional S.A., who supplies rum to several independent rum bottlers. <https://www.costco.com/>

## WORTH PARK and the INTERNATIONAL WINE SPIRITS COMPETITION

Worthy Park Estate was awarded IWSC's 2023 Rum Producer of the Year. Founded in 1670, Worthy Park is Jamaica's last and only remaining single-estate producer, as well as the only Jamaican rum distillery that uses only Jamaican molasses and only molasses that they produce themselves. They remain family owned, independently owned, and most importantly to the brand, Jamaican owned. The judges at the International Wine & Spirits Competition (IWSC) were very impressed with the innovation being carried out in the distillery, from bringing in wine barrels to implement secondary ageing, to maintaining a close relationship with the on-trade. Worthy Park really demonstrated how they listen to what the market needs and aim to fill the gaps. By working with bartenders, the distillery was able to launch two rums that met the demands of what the bars were missing. One of these rums is Worthy Park 109 Proof, which is a 'dark overproof' pot still rum, that the judges awarded a gold medal and 96 points, stating it was "a dense and complex rum, packed full of treacle and dark chocolate flavors with well-balanced soft oak tannins and some savory leather notes on the very long and textured finish." Worthy Park's commitment to social responsibility was commended by the IWSC. Their sustainability efforts were applauded, the company didn't just use their efforts as a way to tick a box, but because it makes sense from a production and efficiency standpoint. They have two deep wells and an aqueduct that was built in the 1700s which carry water into the production facilities. All of the bagasse from sugar crushing is used to create electricity which powers the majority of the offices, buildings and housing on site. Their commitment to their workers was praised by the judges, a lot of their employees (from Senior Managers down to agricultural workers) have housing provided, free of cost, from Worthy Park, including their families. Their family ethos extends to their employees with a lot of generational families that work there too. Worthy Park included on their competition application form, "We are a big part of the community and we're committed to not only building our business but building up the lives of those around us." <https://worthyparkestate.com/>  
<https://iwsc.net/>

## TRAVELLERS LIQUORS

The latest from Travellers Liquors is a line of flavored rums they are calling Ruta Maya, an homage to Belize's rich indigenous Maya heritage. Perla Perdomo, the Executive Chairperson of Travellers Liquors, shared, "These rums aren't just about taste. They encapsulate Belizean authenticity. The ingredients are locally-sourced, with the coffee

being a premium high-altitude bean roasted right here in Belize.” The new offerings include:  
 Ouro Rum, a blend of rums aged 3 to 5 years in Kentucky Bourbon barrels.  
 Blanco Rum, a blend of Travellers white rums at different levels of distillation. It’s a very clean spirit with subtle sweetness, velvety smoothness, and a delightful hint of citrus.  
 CocoLime, a double filtered rum combined with local coconut from small Belizean processors and natural lime from the citrus factory, it’s a tropical delight.  
 Coffee Rum, rum infused with local coffee beans.  
<https://rutamayaram.com/>

### EMINENTE

César Martí, Cuba’s youngest Maestro Ronero (the name used for a master rum distiller) has just added Gran Reserva Edition N° to the Eminente portfolio. He started with a collection of aguardientes (Cuban sugarcane eaux-de-vie) distilled to 75% ABV. These were aged in white oak whiskey barrels in a dry cellar. In the Cuban tradition, these are then blended with a younger, lighter rum and matured further. The blend is then finished in French Oak, before bottling at 43.5% ABV. Drawing inspiration from 19th-century Cuban rum, César Martí brought a renewed complexity to this Central Cuban rum by mastering the art of ageing and blending aguardientes. Growing up in sugarcane fields that stretched “as far as the eye could see”, he learnt his craft from his grandparents and maternal family who, having worked in the sugar industry, passed on to him generations of know-how. César Martí has dedicated his career to the pursuit of the utmost quality in Cuban rum.  
<https://www.eminente.com/en/>

### ROYAL CANE CASK COMPANY

A recent email from the Concierge Sales division of Total Wines offered several spectacular rums from the Royal Cane Cask Company. The email described Royal Cane as having the experience and know-how of a legacy business, but the soul of a startup. Above all, it is a team of primed palates and savvy scouts who scour the globe in search of ultra-rare, ultra-aged, and sometimes forgotten casks. As they journey from Jamaica to Japan, from Australia to Venezuela, from South America to the U.S., they operate with a clear directive: that each rum the company releases is limited to but a single cask; and that each also has the depth, clarity, and resonance to live up to the brand’s exceptionally high standard. The latest offerings included:  
 2006 Belize – a 17-year-old column still rum from Travellers Liquours, bottled at 53%  
 1999 Guyana – a 24-year-old pot still rum from Demerara Distillers Limited, bottled at 52%  
 2006 Barbados – a 17-year-old blend of column and pot still rums from Foursquare, bottled at 54%  
 2004 Fiji – a 19-year-old pot still rum from South Pacific Distilleries, bottled at 53%  
 2000 Jamaica -a 23-year-old pot still rum from Clarendon, bottled at 47%

2006 Panama – a 17-year-old column still rum from Varela Hermanos, bottled at 53%  
 2002 Trinidad – a 21-year-old column still rum from Trinidad Distillers Ltd., bottled at 52%  
 2006 Trinidad – a 17 year old column still rum from Trinidad Distillers Ltd., bottled at 53%  
 2004 Venezuela – a 19-year-old column still rum from Corporation Alcoholes del Caraibe, bottled at 52%  
 Royal Cane Cask Company is a part of Infinity Spirits, who also owns Cane Island Rums, whose offerings consists of Single Island Blends and Single Estate Rums. The Single Island Blends are blends of rum coming from different distilleries from one island. The newest offering is from Jamaica and is a wonderful blend of rums from the Worthy Park, Monymusk and Yarmouth distilleries. The Single Estate Rums are sourced from single distilleries in Thailand, Venezuela, Guatemala, Australia and El Salvador. The Cane Island Rums are an economical opportunity to experience good rums from distilleries and countries that may be new to you.  
<https://concierge.totalwine.com/>  
<https://www.royalcanerum.com/>  
<https://www.infinity-spirits.com/>  
<https://www.caneisland-rum.com/>

### KO HANA RUM

In time for the holidays, Ko Hana just released their 2023 Hawaiian Heirloom Collection, a set of four engraved 375 ml bottles that harmoniously blends their entire collection of 34 Hawaiian heirloom sugarcanes. Ko Hana’s dedication to preserving the legacy of heirloom sugarcane varieties has culminated in a collection of four distinct rums that will transport your senses to the lush cane fields of Kunia. The engraved bottles beautifully encapsulate the essence of their sugarcane fields nestled at the foothills of the Waianae mountain range in Kunia, Hawai’i. Imbued with elements of the Hana Aloha ceremony, this design pays homage to the rich cultural heritage that infuses every drop of their exceptional rum. The set includes:

- **Kea White Rum** – an un-aged white rum that beautifully encapsulates the essence of our sugarcane fields nestled at the foothills of the local mountain range. Bottled at 40% ABV.
- **Koho Barrel Select Aged in American Oak** - aged to perfection second use American oak barrel and bottled at 45%.
- **Kila Aged in an Ex-Bourbon Cask** (Cask Strength) - aged in new American oak for 4.5 years and bottled at 60.5%.
- **Koa Aged in a Hawaiian Koa Wood Barrel** - the epitome of luxury, aged in an ex-bourbon cask for 5 years and finished in a Hawaiian Koa wood barrel for 8 months.

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

# Easy Cranberry Rum Punch

## Ingredients (8 Servings):

- 1 C. Fresh or Frozen Cranberries
- 1 C. White Granulated Sugar
- 1 C. Water
- 1 750-ml Bottle of Low-Congener (Light) White Rum
- 3 C. Dry Hard Cider
- 2 C. Unsweetened 100% Cranberry Juice
- 1 C. Ginger Ale
- ¼ C. Fresh Lime Juice
- Orange Slices and Rosemary Sprigs for Garnish (Optional)

## Directions:

1. Bring sugar and water to a boil in a small saucepan, whisking until sugar is dissolved. Let simple syrup cool.
2. Stir rum, cider, cranberry juice, ginger ale, lime juice, 3 tsp. simple syrup, and some cranberry ice in a pitcher or punch bowl. Taste punch; add more syrup if needed. Optional: garnish with orange slices and rosemary sprigs.
3. Enjoy!







# The Sweet Business of Sugar



THE **Rum**  
UNIVERSITY





# Philippines

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:** September 29, 2023

**Report Number:** RP2023-0061

**Report Name:** Sugar Semi-annual

**Country:** Philippines

**Post:** Manila

**Report Category:** Sugar

**Prepared By:** Florence Mojica-Sevilla

**Approved By:** Mark Hanzel

**Report Highlights:**

FAS Manila adjusts marketing year (MY) 2024 raw sugar production down to 1.8 million metric tons, 100,000 metric tons (MT) below USDA Official. Declining sugarcane planting areas and weather disturbances including the ongoing El Niño are expected to affect sugar production. Post forecasts no sugar exports following the recent Sugar Order (SO) No. 1 allocating all production to domestic consumption. Post sees no raw sugar importation as the Philippines government seeks to protect local producers but forecasts refined sugar imports of 240,00 MT (257,000 MT raw equivalent) to stabilize consumer prices and provide two months of buffer stocks. This includes the 150,000 MT refined imports approved by President Marcos as stated in SO7. Consumption stays at 2.2 million MT as prices remain elevated.



## Production:

**Centrifugal Sugar (Raw Sugar).** FAS Manila adjusted marketing year (MY) 2024 (September 2023 to August 2024) raw sugar production to 1.8 million MT, 100,000 MT lower than USDA Official. This is below the Sugar Regulatory Administration's (SRA) forecast of 1.85 million MT as noted in [Sugar Order No. 1](#) (SO1), released on September 11, 2023. The reduction was attributed to the closure of one sugar mill, Central Azucarera Don Pedro (CADP) in Batangas (Luzon), due to financial challenges. In addition, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services (PAGASA) projected El Niño to persist from November to January, which is normally within the dry season in Negros (a major producing island). The El Niño phenomenon increases the likelihood of below-normal rainfall and reduced yields. SRA considers a production drop of at least 10 to 15 percent, depending on the severity of El Niño.

Post revised production for MY 2023 to 1.79 million MT, down 30,000 MT from the initial forecast of 1.83 million MT, to match official production numbers released by SRA. The reduction was attributed to the SRA's decision not to do early milling in August. Included in the initial forecast was an estimate of 30,000 MT production from August milling. Milling commenced September 10, 2023.

<b>Table 1: Production, Supply, and Distribution Data in (1000 MT)</b>						
<b>Sugar, Centrifugal Market Year Begins</b>	<b>2022</b>		<b>2023</b>		<b>2024</b>	
	<b>Sep 2021</b>		<b>Sep 2022</b>		<b>Sep 2023</b>	
	<b>USDA Official</b>	<b>New Post</b>	<b>USDA Official</b>	<b>New Post</b>	<b>USDA Official</b>	<b>New Post</b>
<b>Philippines</b>						
<b>Beginning Stocks</b> (1000 MT)	1,196	1,196	931	931	1,461	1,465
<b>Beet Sugar Production</b> (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Cane Sugar Production</b> (1000 MT)	2,050	1,800	1,830	1,799	1,900	1,800
<b>Total Sugar Production</b> (1000 MT)	2,100	1,800	1,830	1,799	1,900	1,800
<b>Raw Imports</b> (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Refined Imp. (Raw Val)</b> (1000 MT)	100	235	700	735	257	257
<b>Total Imports</b> (1000 MT)	100	235	700	735	257	257
<b>Total Supply</b> (1000 MT)	3,346	3,231	3,461	3,465	3,618	3,522
<b>Raw Exports</b> (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Refined Exp. (Raw Val)</b> (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	60	0
<b>Total Exports</b> (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	60	0
<b>Human Dom. Consumption</b> (1000 MT)	2,300	2,300	2,000	2,000	2,200	2,200
<b>Other Disappearance</b> (1000 MT)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Use</b> (1000 MT)	2,300	2,300	2,000	2,000	2,200	2,200
<b>Ending Stocks</b> (1000 MT)	1,046	931	1,461	1,465	1,358	1,322
<b>Total Distribution</b> (1000 MT)	3,346	3,231	3,461	3,465	3,618	3,522
(1000 MT)						

Post estimates MY 2024 sugarcane area at 385,000 hectares (ha), slightly below the USDA Official estimate of 390,000 due to loss of area in Batangas supplying CADP. Despite the loss of area in Luzon, expansion in sugarcane areas in Mindanao will partly compensate for the sugarcane farms covered by

CADP, about 10,500 hectares. The prevailing high prices will continue to encourage farmers to plant sugarcane instead of shifting to other crops like, corn, cassava, and banana. Sugarcane planting normally starts in October and ends in May. Some farmers in Batangas continue to plant sugarcane to supply other sugar mill and bioethanol producers. About 85 percent of the more than 385,000 hectares planted are small farms of one to two hectares.

**Table 2: Production, Supply, and Distribution Data in (1000 HA), (1000 MT)**

Sugar Cane for Centrifugal Market Year Begins	2022		2023		2024	
	Sep 2021		Sep 2022		Sep 2023	
	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post
<b>Philippines</b>						
Area Planted (1000 HA)	397	397	388	388	390	385
Area Harvested (1000 HA)	397	397	388	388	390	385
Production (1000 MT)	21,000	21,000	21,100	21,100	21,800	20,000
Total Supply (1000 MT)	21,000	21,000	21,100	21,100	21,800	20,000
Utilization for Sugar (1000 MT)	21,000	21,000	20,345	20,345	21,000	19,200
Utilization for Alcohol (1000 MT)	0	0	755	755	800	800
Total Utilization (1000 MT)	21,000	21,000	21,100	21,100	21,800	20,000

**Table 3: U.S. Dollar to Philippine Peso Exchange Rate**

MY	2021	2022	2023	2024
US\$ - PHP	48.57	52.14	55.68	56.94*

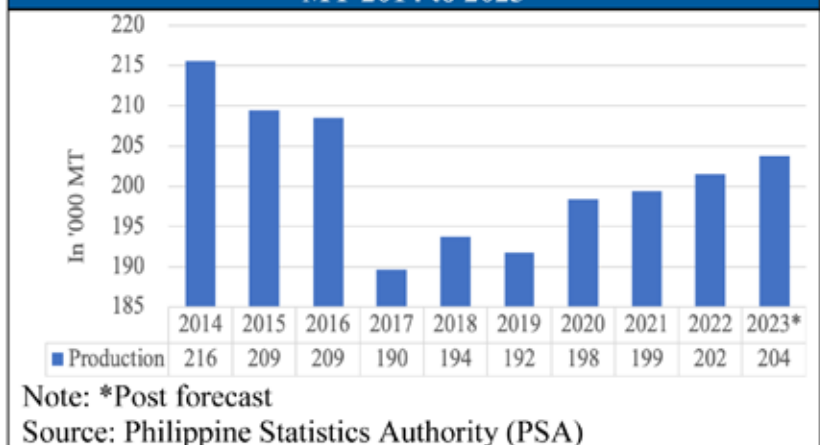
Note: \*September 28, 2023

Source: [Bangko Sentral ng Pilipina](#) (Central Bank of the Philippines)

**Non-centrifugal Sugar (Muscovado).** The increasing interest in healthy and organic food in the Philippines is likely to stimulate demand for muscovado sugar, which is viewed as pure and whole. It serves as an important ingredient in local delicacies, jams, beverages, and in making chocolates.

Muscovado powder has a minimum polarization of 77-86 °Z as stated in the [PNS/BAFS 144:2015](#). It is one of the healthier alternatives to refined sugar. A number of commercial brands are now readily available.

**Figure 1: Muscovado Production MY 2014 to 2023**



**Prices.** For MY 2024, millsite prices may not reach the high prices experienced in the previous year because of the huge stock balance of sugar available in the country. At the end of the milling season, however, millsite prices remain high, averaging Php3,000 per 50-kilogram bag (LKG) in July. Prices normally increase toward the end of the milling season (from June to August) as sugarcane supply becomes low. For MY 2023, millsite prices started to decline in February when imported sugar from [SO6](#) entered the country. Prices, however, remain exorbitantly high at almost double that of 2021 prices, even with ample imported sugar supply.

For MY 2023, prices exhibited double-digit growth of 29 and 27 percent compared to MY 2022. Projected income is computed in terms of mill site prices using sugar yield or the LKG/TC (50-kilogram bag per ton cane) and the prevailing sharing scheme implemented in the mills (i.e., 70:30 or 70 percent to farmer and 30 percent of sugar output to the miller). High prices benefited both millers and planters; however, the planters suffered from high cost of fertilizers and other costs such as labor, power, and fuel.

**Table 4: Mill Site Prices in Pesos per 50-Kilogram Bags**

Month	2021			2022		2023	
	"A" US Quota	"B" Domestic	Composite Price	"B" Domestic	Composite Price	"B" Domestic	Composite Price
Sep	1,114.03	1,521.20	1,492.70	1,597.37	1,597.37	3,363.71	3,363.71
Oct	1,192.76	1,469.80	1,450.40	1,708.81	1,708.81	3,311.77	3,311.77
Nov	1,266.74	1,524.73	1,506.67	1,680.67	1,680.67	3,269.76	3,269.76
Dec	1,283.97	1,509.18	1,493.42	1,735.39	1,735.39	3,058.46	3,058.46
Jan	1,269.79	1,507.10	1,490.48	1,889.43	1,889.43	3,217.94	3,425.27
Feb	1,256.83	1,522.05	1,503.48	1,796.37	1,796.37	3,091.99	3,091.99
Mar	1,289.59	1,608.23	1,585.92	2,022.94	2,022.94	3,100.77	3,100.77
Apr	-	1,658.61	1,658.61	2,184.18	2,184.18	3,177.19	3,177.19
May	-	1,653.92	1,653.92	2,273.26	2,273.26	3,120.01	3,120.01
Jun	-	1,603.56	1,603.56	2,348.83	2,348.83	3,033.33	3,033.33
Jul	-	1,613.33	1,613.33	2,370.00	2,370.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
Aug	-	1,641.24	1,641.24	2,875.47	2,875.47	-	-
<b>Ave.</b>	<b>1,239.10</b>	<b>1,565.98</b>	<b>1,554.37</b>	<b>2,043.56</b>	<b>2,043.56</b>	<b>3,158.63</b>	<b>3,177.48</b>

Note: No "A" sugar in MY 2022 and 2023

Milling operation was terminated in August

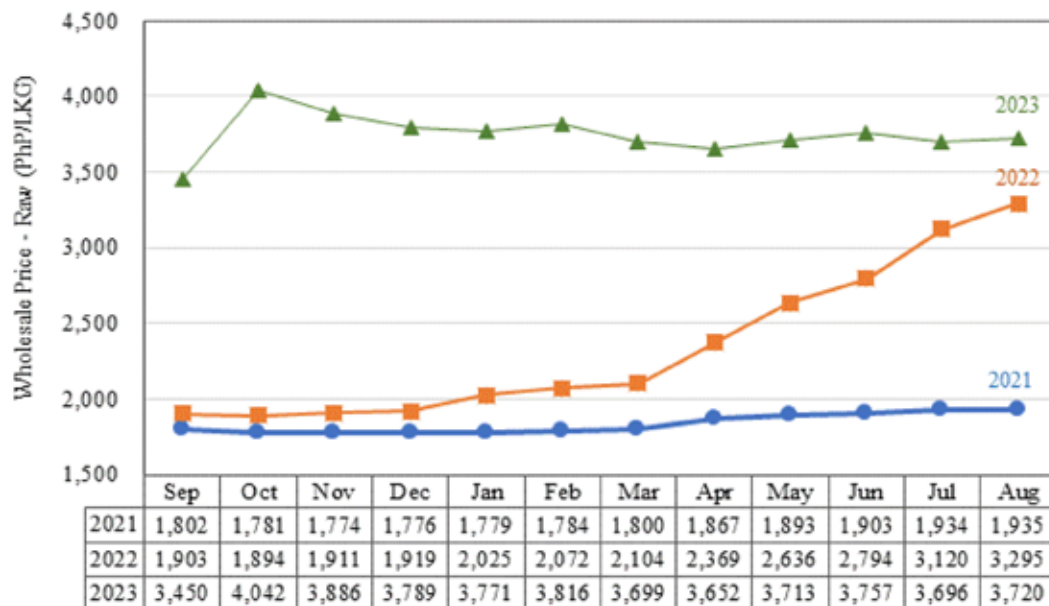
Source: [SRA Millsite Prices](#)

**Wholesale Prices.** Despite importation, refined prices remain high in MY 2023. The high prices continue to prevail coming from the low sugar output in MY 2022, which led to soaring wholesale prices for both raw and refined in anticipation of a sugar shortage. Raw sugar prices escalated to as high as Php3,886 (\$67) per LKG in November 2022. Likewise, refined prices spiked to Php4,746 (\$81) per LKG in October 2022. Prices grew 61 percent and 46 percent, for raw and refined sugar, respectively, on the average for MY 2023, which had doubled compared to 2021 prices.

The price of raw sugar is determined on a weekly basis via a bidding process initiated by the sugarcane planters' association (note: sugarcane farmers are known locally as planters) with offices located inside the mill compound. The result of the bidding in Negros (the major producing island), normally done on

a Thursday, is used as a reference price made available to other planters' associations nationwide. It is then within the decision of the sugar trader to use the same price or increase/decrease the price to buyers, but normally it will not differ more than P10-50 (\$0.18 to \$0.88) per LKG bag.

**Figure 2: Wholesale Prices of Raw Sugar Metro Manila**

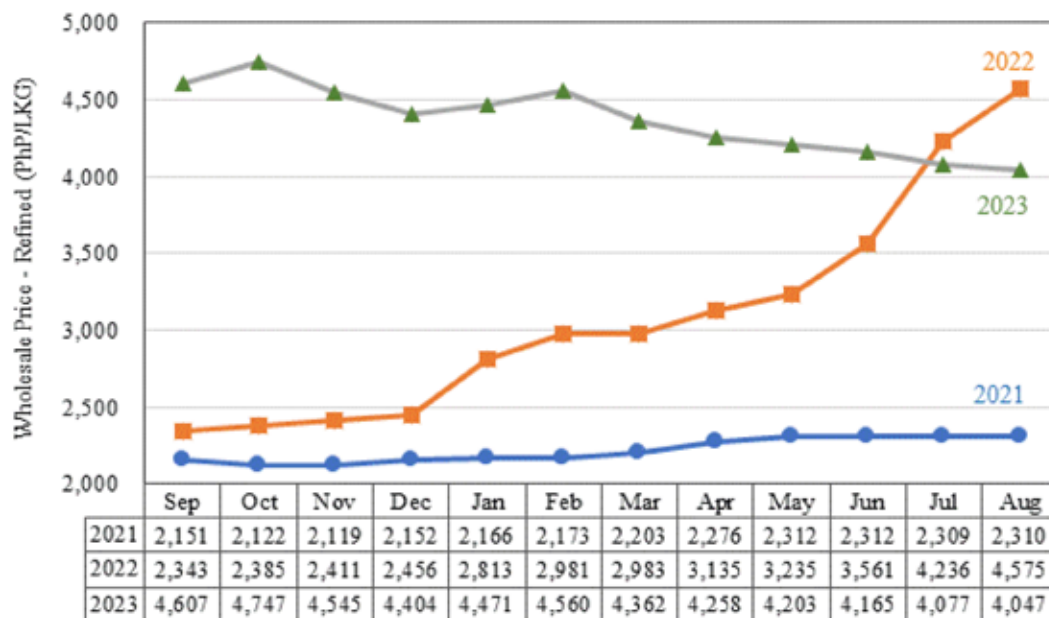


**MY 2023 in \$/LKG**

Sep	60.07
Oct	68.72
Nov	67.41
Dec	68.04
Jan	68.57
Feb	69.66
Mar	67.51
Apr	71.16
May	66.63
Jun	67.22
Jul	67.29
Aug	66.24

Source: [SRA Metro Manila Price Monitoring Report](#)

**Figure 3: Wholesale Prices of Refined Sugar Metro Manila**



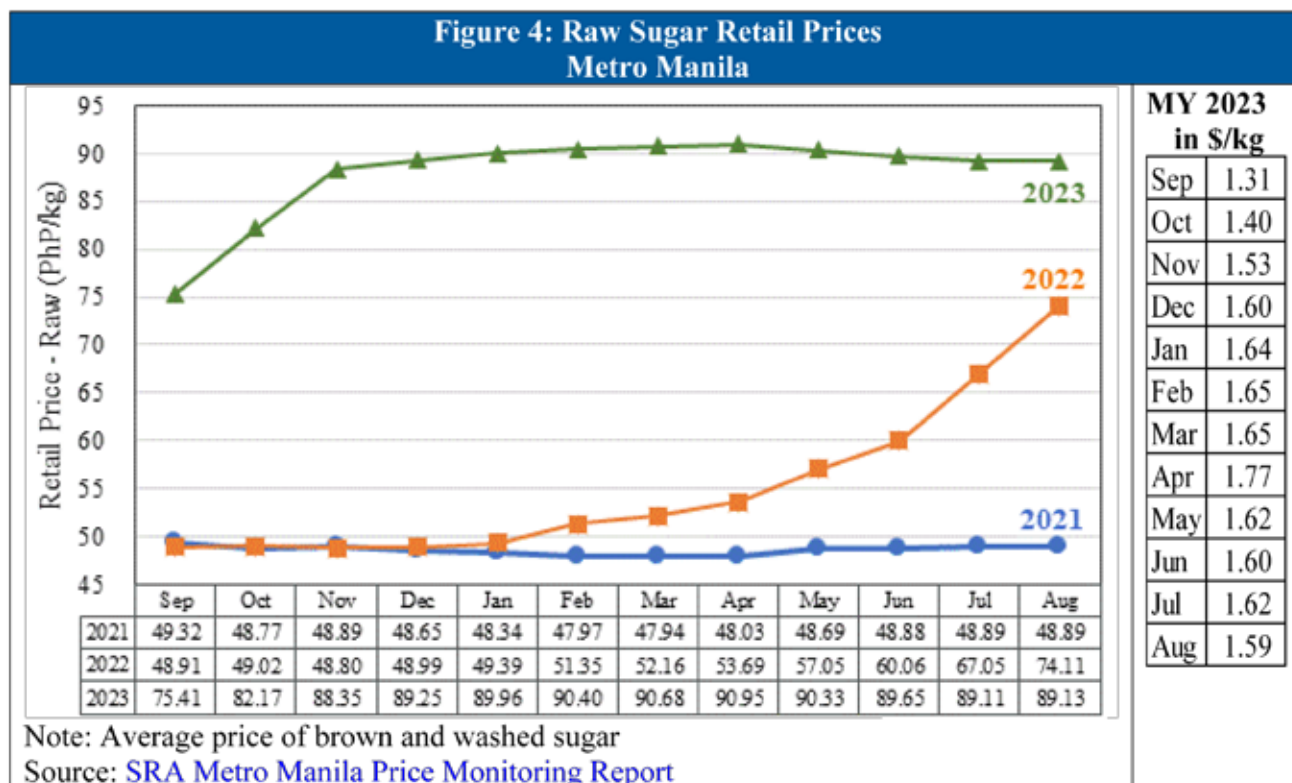
**MY 2023 In \$/LkG**

Sep	80.21
Oct	80.70
Nov	78.84
Dec	79.10
Jan	81.31
Feb	83.23
Mar	79.61
Apr	82.98
May	75.42
Jun	74.52
Jul	74.24
Aug	72.06

Source: [SRA Metro Manila Price Monitoring Report](#)

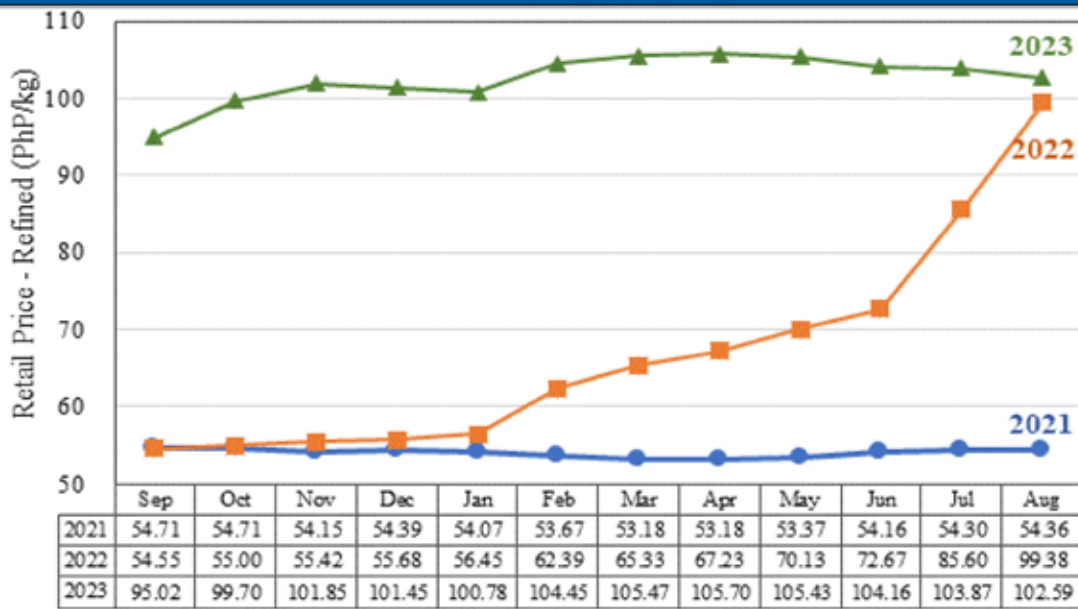
**Retail Prices.** Toward the end of the milling season MY 2023, retail prices of raw and refined grew by 3 percent and 20 percent, respectively, from a growth of 55 percent and 83 percent, respectively, in MY 2022. Refined prices reached a high of PhP106/kg (\$2.06/kg) in Metro Manila. The wholesale and retail prices in Metro Manila can be found [here](#).

Consumers wait to see prices decline, but prices continue to be more than P100/kg (\$1.76/kg) since January 2023 despite high inventory. Prices had been stable since January but have not gone down to previous levels, not even closer to 2021 prices. Per post computation, imported refined sugar from ASEAN can be sold between PhP60 (\$1.05/kg) to PhP65/kilo (\$1.14/kg). See [GAIN Sugar Report](#) for price computation.



Wholesale and retail prices of refined sugar remain elevated despite the country having ample refined sugar stocks. See [Sugar Semi-Annual 2022](#) for monthly analysis. High demand for raw sugar withdrawal at the beginning of MY 2023 resulted in soaring prices at the mill, which translated to high wholesale and retail prices. The country failed to support the needed raw sugar for refineries to operate. Millsite prices went up and have not significantly gone down since then.

**Figure 5: Refined Sugar Retail Prices  
Metro Manila**



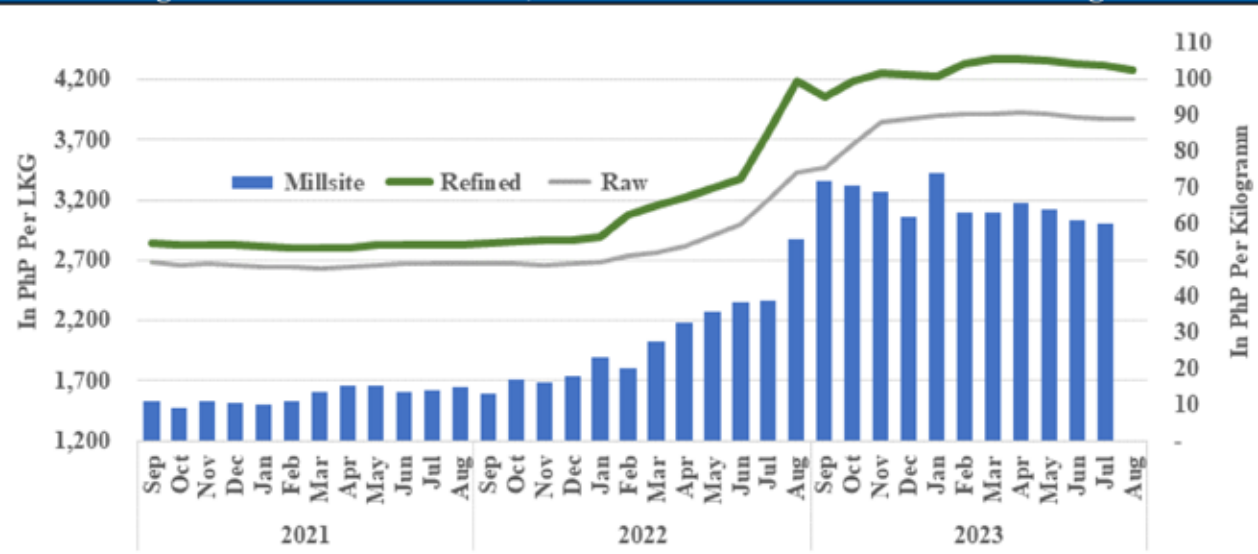
**MY 2023  
in \$/kg**

Sep	1.65
Oct	1.69
Nov	1.77
Dec	1.82
Jan	1.83
Feb	1.91
Mar	1.92
Apr	2.06
May	1.89
Jun	1.86
Jul	1.89
Aug	1.83

Source: [SRA Metro Manila Price Monitoring Report](#)

The government tried to resolve the price issue through importation, and additional importation was approved to raise to a two-month buffer of 240,000 MT. The objective was to pull down prices, which adversely impact consumers. Importation lowered millsite prices, but declines did not translate to retail prices of raw and refined, which remain elevated. Consumers continue to wait for lower prices, which have doubled from just over a year ago. Importation brought buffer stocks to a comfortable level until the end of MY 2023 but failed to affect the high retail prices of refined sugar.

**Figure 6: Behavior of Millsite, and Retail Prices of Raw and Refined Sugar**



Source: [SRA Millsite Prices](#) and [Metro Manila Price Monitoring Report](#)

To date, the [SO6](#) and [SO7](#) have failed to address the high retail prices affecting consumers and food manufacturers. Food prices have fueled a 14-year-high inflation rate since the beginning of MY 2023. On February 2023, sugar, confectionery, and desserts represented the highest year-on-year increase at 37 percent, which accounted for the highest share of food inflation. (Source: [PSA Summary Inflation Report, February 2023](#)). There was a slowdown in the inflation rate starting July, but sugar remains elevated. The slowdown, however, contributed to the deceleration of food inflation in July 2023 with 21.4 percent inflation in July compared to 28.9 percent in June 2023 (See [PSA Summary of Inflation Report, July 2023](#)).

To address the rising prices, some sugar donations are sold at the [Department of Agriculture’s Kadiwa Markets](#) at a lower price. The SRA cleared sugar shipped from Thailand and later rendered as forfeited for sale at the Kadiwa markets. About 4,000 MT of refined sugar was released for sale based on the guidelines specified in [Memorandum Circular No. 4](#), as well as the [Republic Act 10863](#) or the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

**Muscovado Prices.** High sugar prices also resulted to high muscovado prices. Local prices had gone up ranging from PhP 124-199 per kilograms (\$2.18-3.49/kg) at the retail level. The export price has at times been up to four times higher for high quality muscovado than the prevailing domestic market prices. The favorable retail price in the domestic and export market pulls up farmgate prices to the benefit of producers.

Table 5: Muscovado Prices	
Year	PhP/Kg
2015	83.37
2016	86.21
2017	79.61
2018	82.70
2019	85.07
2020	82.99
2021	87.75
2022	90.00
2023*	124.00

\*Post forecast

Source: SRA

## Consumption:

**Centrifugal Sugar (Raw Sugar).** Post forecasts sugar demand to remain flat for MY 2024 at 2.2 million MT, in line with USDA Official. The high prices of sugar and sugar-using products will continue to discourage increases in consumption. The high inflation rate affected consumers and focused their spending on basic commodities. Domestic demand is divided into three main segments: household (32 percent), institutional (18 percent) and industrial (50 percent). Among industrial users, the beverage industry, preserved fruits, and confectionery are the most important. Based on previous studies (1993, 2001, 2008) by the University of Asia and the Pacific-Center for Food and Agri Business (UA&P-CFA), Philippine consumers preferred refined sugar (60 percent) over washed sugar (25 percent) and brown sugar (15 percent). See [2022 Sugar Annual](#). With the high prices, per capita consumption also slowed to about 20 kg/capita.

**Non-centrifugal Sugar (Muscovado).** Currently, demand for Muscovado outstrips supply, resulting in high retail prices, and making both the domestic and export markets lucrative for muscovado producers. Consumers of muscovado come from the health and wellness sectors as well as institutional buyers.

## ALTERNATIVE SWEETENERS

Among other forms of sugar and sugar substitutes or alternative sweeteners are high fructose corn syrup (HFCS), coconut sap sugar, muscovado, and molasses. These alternative sweeteners serve niche markets, as sugar holds the largest share of consumption.

**High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS).** The Philippines used to be a major market for HFCS (HS Code 170260), importing about half of China's exports annually (up to 300,000 MT). On January 1, 2018, however, the Philippines imposed a tax of PhP6 (\$0.12) per liter on drinks using sugar and other sweeteners, while those using HFCS are charged PhP12 (\$0.24) per liter. As a result, the sweetened beverage producers, the biggest HFCS buyers, shifted to sugar to avoid the higher taxes.

**Coconut Sap Sugar or Coco Sugar (HS Code 170290).** Currently, coco sugar is only a small fraction of the country's coconut industry, but the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) has been actively promoting coco sugar as an alternative to cane sugar to boost local demand.

Coco sugar has a lower glycemic index (GI) of 35 per serving, compared to GI 65 to GI100 for cane sugar.

**Table 6: Muscovado Supply and Demand  
In 1,000 Metric Tons**

DEMAND/ CONSUMPTION	MARKETING YEAR		
	2021	2022	2023*
PRODUCTION	199	202	204
+ Import	-	-	-
- Export (a)	34	36	37
= Consumption	165	166	167

Note:(a) Excludes exports of raw to the U.S.

\*Post forecast

Source: SRA, PSA, and TDM

**Table 7: Fructose/HFCS Imports  
In Metric Tons**

	2021	2022	2023
September	378	1,732	870
October	1,386	1,761	1,370
November	453	1,043	1,977
December	993	921	1,017
January	873	578	907
February	1,151	515	1,469
March	909	1,462	1,003
April*	2,058	1,675	1,430
May	1,198	1,380	1,225
June	1,369	855	2,184
July	1,161	1,272	1,378
August	705	1,127	1,311
Total	12,635	14,324	16,141

Source: SRA



Coco sugar is exempted from additional excise taxes on sweetened products in the Philippines.

**Honey** (HS Code 040900). Honey is sweeter than sugar due to the high level of fructose with a GI value of 55. The Philippines imported 715 MT of honey in MY 2022, while its local production is estimated at 100 MT per year.

The Philippines produces and imports a number of sugar alternatives approved by the Philippine Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Many dieters use alternative sweeteners and artificially sweetened foods to cut sugar consumption without eliminating sweetness for beverages, baked foods, and ice cream, among others. For more information on sugar alternatives, please see the [2021 Sugar Annual Report](#). The consumption of sugar alternatives, including lactose, glucose, and fructose/HFCS is significantly lower than sugar consumption, but consumption of sugar alternatives has been increasing over the past years.

Table 8: Alternative Sweeteners
<b>Sucralose</b> (Splenda) 600 times sweeter than sugar Supplier: Singapore, China, U.S.
<b>Aspartame</b> (Equal, NutraSweet, NutraTaste) 160-220 times sweeter than sugar Supplier: China, Japan, Taiwan
<b>Stevia</b> (Sweet & Fit) 300 times sweeter than sugar Supplier: Local, China, Malaysia, Thailand
<b>Saccharin</b> (Sweet N Low) 200-700 times sweeter than sugar Supplier: China, South Korea, Japan
<b>Acesulfame</b> (Sweet One, Sunnett) 200 times sweeter than sugar Supplier: Indonesia, China, Singapore

Table 9: Consumption of Sugar and Alternative Sweeteners In '000 MT Raw Sugar Equivalent			
DEMAND/ CONSUMPTION	MARKETING YEAR		
	2021	2022	2023*
Sugar	2,300	2000	2200
Fructose/HFCS	10	14	15
Sugar Alternatives	504	770	780
Aspartame	177	374	310
Acesulfame	183	181	200
Sucralose	113	159	212
Saccharin	21	43	45
Stevia	9	13	13

Note: \*Post Forecast

*Aspartame* – HS Code 292429, Cyclic Amides (Including Cyclic Carbamates) And Their Derivatives, And Salts Thereof, Nesoi;

*Saccharin* – HS Code 292511

*Sucralose* – HS Code 293214

*Acesulfame* – HS Code 293499, Nucleic Acids and Their Salts, Whether Or Not Chemically Defined; Other Heterocyclic Compounds, Nesoi

*Stevia* – HS Code 293890, Glycosides, Natural or Reproduced by Synthesis, And Their Salts, Ethers, Esters and Other Derivatives, Nesoi

Philippines has minimal production.

Source: Trade Data Monitor, and SRA

### Trade:

**Exports.** Post revises MY 2024 exports to zero, following the recent [SOI](#) allocating all production to domestic consumption. USDA Official's initial forecast was that limited exports could happen in MY 2024 with the high carryover stocks due to importation. Allocating all to "B" sugar was unexpected as discussions were underway on the export-import program. The SRA, however, mentioned it will continue to do periodic assessment on production and withdrawals to adjust percentage allocation and distribution, if needed. Moreover, SRA issued [SO9](#) on the reclassification (conversion) of outstanding "A" or U.S. quota sugar and "D" or world market sugar to "B" or domestic market sugar under certain

conditions with application no later than August 15, 2023. SRA also issued [SO8](#) or the omnibus guidelines for the reinstatement of homeless “A” and “D” *quedans* on July 17, 2023.

In the past, 6 to 7 percent of total production was allocated for the U.S. quota. Given the variability in decision, Posts decided to revised forecast and wait until SRA issued “A” *quedan*. The United States maintains the Philippines’ export quota of 145,235 metric tons raw value (MTRV) of raw cane sugar under the tariff rate quota (TRQ) scheme of the World Trade Organization.

In recent years, the United States has been the sole export market for Philippine raw sugar. Exports to the United States in MY 2021 reached 112,000 MT, below the allocation of 142,160 MTRV or 138,154 metric tons commercial weight (MTCW). In MY 2022, the United States allocated the same amount, but upon the request of the Philippines, the said allocation was lowered to 18,152 MTCW. No actual exports happened on the said amount. U.S. quota allocation of 145,235 MTRV (141,141 MTCW) for MY 2023 was also unused.

**Table 10: US Sugar Quota and Philippine Shipment, In MTCW**

Marketing Year	U.S. Tariff Rate Quota Allocation	Philippine Shipment
2021	138,154	112,008
2022	138,154	-
2023	141,142	-

Source: US TRQ and SRA

**Imports.** Post sees no importation of raw sugar in MY 2024, as the government seeks to protect local producers. The high importation of refined sugar in MY 2023 translates to high carryover stocks in MY 2024 of refined sugar and leaves ample supplies of raw sugar.

FAS Manila keeps MY 2024 refined sugar imports of 240,000 MT (raw equivalent of 257,000 MT). Already included is the 150,000 MT refined imports approved by President Marcos as stated in [SO7](#), which should be in country by September 15, 2023. The intention of this import program is to ensure sufficient actual supply for domestic consumption and provide a two-month buffer stock. SO7 is open for importation by registered SRA International Traders in good standing. The SRA-issued [SO6](#) (second import program) remain a controversy having only three traders approved to import 440,000 MT of refined sugar. Prior to SO6, President Marcos approved importation of 150,000 MT of refined sugar, as stated in [SO2](#),(first import program) and the imports occurred in November 2022. Both import programs (SO2 and SO6), however, failed to lower prices at the retail level, which further burdened consumers. FAS Manila revises MY 2023 refined imports to 687,025 MT (raw equivalent of 735,117 MT).

**Stocks:**

Raw sugar stocks remain at a comfortable level at the beginning of MY 2024 from stable carryover stocks from MY 2023. Historically, November is the starting month wherein monthly raw production can supply monthly demand. There are ample refined stocks due to the entry of imported sugar, the highest in recent years. Stocks will continue to be high at the start of the milling season. Ending raw physical stocks of 198,463 MT stored in mill warehouses are higher by 48 percent compared to previous MY 2022. With the on-going harvest, there will be a build of raw sugar if it is not sold in the market. SRA monitors warehouses owned by millers, traders, and importers who are required to register all warehouses to SRA.

The [SO6](#) and [SO7](#) import program allocated two-month buffer stocks of 240,000 MT of refined sugar from the 85,000 MT previous buffer allocation. Refined sugar stocks from local production and carryover from previous MY (145,753 MT) escalated 437 percent, while those from imports (367,975 MT) increased 213 percent compared to MY 2022, which indicate refined stocks build up from local production and imports. The high buffer stocks at the end of MY 2023 have slowed down millsite prices, currently (as of Sep 21) at PhP2,600 (\$45.67) per LKG.

**Table 11. Net Ending Stocks of Raw and Refined Sugar, In MT**

By Type	RAW SUGAR			REFINED SUGAR		
	2021	2022	2023*	2021	2022	2023*
Marketing Year						
Supply						
Starting Balance	254,763	252,304	133,541	355,341	195,000	147,593
From domestic production	254,763	252,304	133,541	294,523	143,712	27,388
From Imports	-	-	-	60,818	51,288	120,205
Sugar Imports			10,000	81,032	228,052	687,025
Sugar Production	2,143,018	1,820,863	1,799,466	758,840	748,506	640,908
<b>TOTAL SUPPLY</b>	<b>2,397,781</b>	<b>2,073,167</b>	<b>1,943,007</b>	<b>1,195,213</b>	<b>1,171,558</b>	<b>1,475,526</b>
Withdrawals						
From Imports	-	-	4,025	90,562	157,261	439,254
From local	2,033,366	1,939,658	1,740,519	909,742	864,927	522,544
Export – US quota	112,008					
<b>TOTAL WITHDRAWALS</b>	<b>2,145,374</b>	<b>1,939,658</b>	<b>1,744,544</b>	<b>1,000,303</b>	<b>1,022,187</b>	<b>961,798</b>
Average monthly withdrawals	178,781	161,638	145,379	83,359	85,182	80,150
Physical Stocks						
<b>NET ENDING STOCKS</b>	<b>252,407</b>	<b>133,541</b>	<b>198,463</b>	<b>195,000</b>	<b>149,371</b>	<b>513,728</b>
Local Production	217,590	126,284	183,377	143,712	27,291	145,753
Imports	-	-	5,975	51,288	122,080	367,975
Transfer to refinery	34,817	7,257	9,111			

Note: \*As of August 27, 2023

Source: SRA

### Trade Policy:

[Executive Order 892 \(EO 892\)](#). Imports of sugar from ASEAN countries are levied at 5 percent duty. The Philippines, a signatory to the World Trade Organization (WTO), has lifted quantitative restrictions on imports of all food products but maintains tariff rate quotas on sugar. The tariff rates for sugar were established in [Executive Order 313](#), which set varying in-quota and out-quota rates. In-quota rates apply for sugar imported within MAV, while any imports in excess of the MAV are assessed the out-of-quota rate.

For non-ASEAN countries, under the Uruguay Round of the WTO, the Philippines committed to a final ten-year MAV of 65,050 MT of raw sugar, with a tariff rate of 50 percent. All importation in excess of the MAV is subject to a tariff rate of 65 percent. The Most Favored Nation (MFN) tariff has not changed since 2016. See [Sugar Annual](#) report for a table of ASEAN harmonized tariff codes and MFN rates.

On February 22, 2023, the Philippine Tariff Commission announced a [Comprehensive Review of MFN Tariff Schedule](#) to set the MFN Tariff Schedule for 2024 to 2028. All interested parties (both Philippines and foreign stakeholders) were requested to submit comments or positions by April 14, 2023. As of publication of this report, no decisions have been announced.

**Policy:**

SRA has the mandate under [EO 18 Series of 1986](#) and [Republic Act No. 10659](#) or the Sugar Industry Development Act (SIDA) of 2015 to establish a balance between domestic production and the country’s sugar requirement.

**Sugar Order.** Philippine sugar policy, trade, and domestic prices are generally regulated by the SRA, working closely with various influential industry stakeholders. During the start of each crop year, the SRA issues a central policy (known as Sugar Order No.1) on production and marketing of sugar for the country, which allocates how much production goes to the domestic and export markets and to reserves. These orders are adjusted as the season progresses. A running history of SRA sugar orders may be found [here](#).

**Sugar Order No. 1.** SRA released SO No.1 on September 11, 2023, which forecasts production at 1.85 million MT for MY 2024. The SRA allocated all production for the domestic market or “B” sugar, with none classified as “A” sugar for the U.S. market. SRA periodically assesses sugar allocation throughout the year based on the sugar supply situation. A list of policies is available in the [GAIN Sugar Annual 2023](#). The new administration brought a new start, and issued a policy indicating that all unused sugar *quedans* from previous crop years must be reclassified or shredded and not allowed for use through the issuance of [SO8](#), and [SO9](#).

**Ethanol.** Sugarcane and sugar molasses are the primary feedstocks used for bioethanol production, while the bagasse is mainly used for power cogeneration of sugar mills, refineries, and bioethanol distilleries. There are currently 13 operating bioethanol distilleries and six power-generating plants in the country. For more information, see the [Biofuels Annual Report 2023](#).

The reference price of bioethanol is based on the mill site prices of sugar and molasses. The National Biofuels Board (NBB) through the SRA sets up a price index or reference price of bioethanol, which serves as the basis for negotiations between oil companies and bioethanol producers.

Marketing Year	Sugar Composite Price (PhP/LKG)	Molasses Price (PhP/MT)	Bioethanol Reference Price (PhP/Li)
2021	1,554	9,315	57.48
2022	2,044	11,462	65.79
2023	3,177	14,702	82.07

Source: SRA

**Molasses.** Molasses (HS 170310) is a major by-product from sugar production, used in the manufacture of fuel ethanol, potable alcohol, and disinfectant, among others. Molasses imports have steadily increased in the past three years. The largest suppliers in MY 2023 were India, Indonesia, and Thailand. Molasses prices in MY 2023 followed the same trend as sugar prices with the highest average price in June 2023 at PhP15,463/ton (\$277/ton), which grew 22 percent compared to June 2022. In MY 2021 molasses prices had drastic highs and lows due to erratic global supply and domestic production and demand.

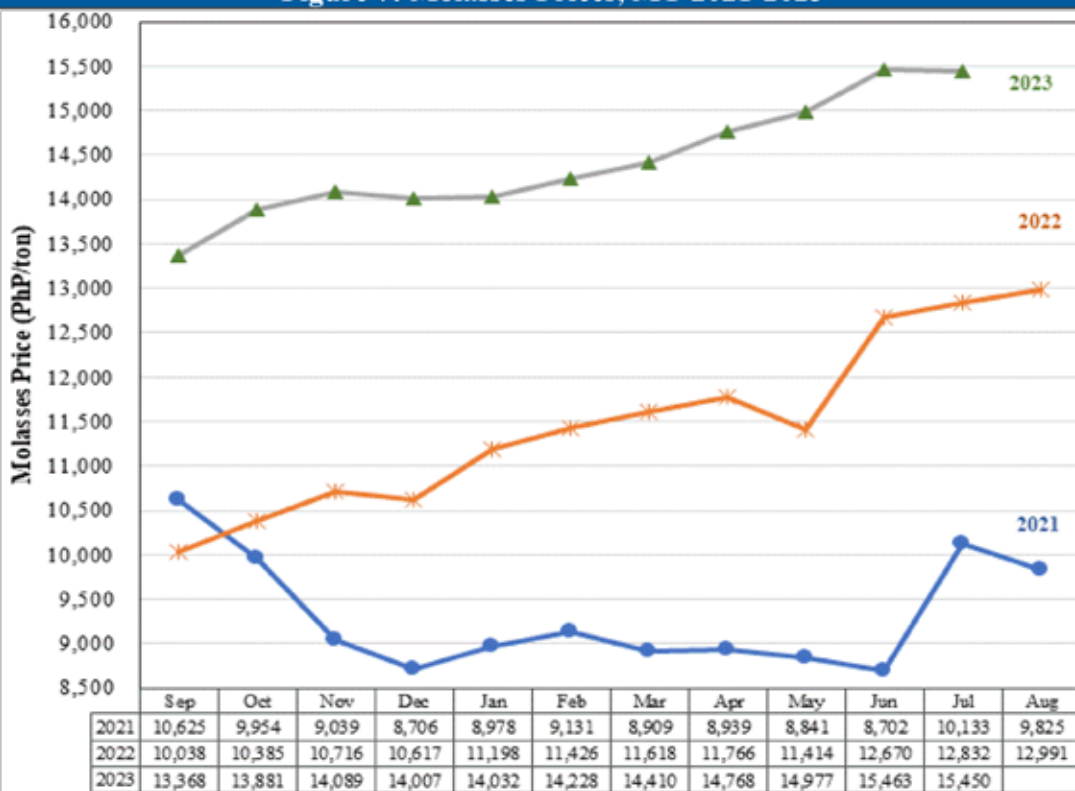
Particular	Marketing Year		
	2021	2022	2023
Beginning Stocks	207,531	208,214	149,677
Production	1,165,384	935,480	847,182
Local Supply	1,372,914	1,143,693	996,859
Consumption	1,178,880	1,004,997	888,302
Ending Stocks (Local)	194,034	138,696	108,557
Imports (a)	506,350	516,129	712,707*

Note: \*Post forecast

(a) including molasses for ethanol production (potable and disinfectant). Under the law, imported molasses is not allowed to be used as feedstock for fuel ethanol production.

Source: SRA and TDM for imports

**Figure 7: Molasses Prices, MY 2021-2023**



**MY 2023  
in \$/ton**

Sep	233
Oct	236
Nov	244
Dec	252
Jan	255
Feb	260
Mar	263
Apr	288
May	269
Jun	277
Jul	281
Aug	-

Source: SRA

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# 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



## Fuller Cigars

While working at the bar around the middle of October, one of our employees notified me of an unexpected visitor waiting for me at the bar's lobby. Thinking that it probably was yet another salesperson wanting to show his products, I made my way there as soon as I could. I was pleasantly surprised to find out that it was Carlos Troncoso, a true cigar aficionado who was making the rounds, promoting his own cigar brand. Unfortunately for him, he kept being told the same thing, that he should present me his portfolio and that they would purchase cigars from him if I gave them the green light. It was a wonderful meeting, and we scheduled a day and a time to do a pairing.

Carlos was unexpectedly introduced to the world of cigars during his visit to Cuba in 2003, a couple of years before my first trip there. He told me that he had his first cigar at the Hotel Meliá Havana and he was immediately hooked. A risky start with a great result, unlike the stories from many beginners who have disastrous experiences, and this is why I always suggest that neophytes should start by visiting the cigar lounges, where they should request the staff's guidance, so that their introduction to this wonderful world can go smoothly and pleasantly. The day of the pairing arrived and Carlos showed up with different cigars: one aimed more to beginners and the second one with a more intense body.

The first cigar was from the Valles de Chile line, we smoked a Cabo de Hornos, which looks like a Robusto (5 x 52) with a light Connecticut wrapper and Dominican filler. Upon lighting up the cigar, I was pleasantly surprised to experience a mild to medium intensity, with creamy notes, tannins and an excellent draw.

To pair with this cigar, I prepared a Rum Old Fashioned using Mulata 12 Year Old from Cuba. I told Carlos that this cocktail was my "wildcard" for this type of pairing, firstly because it is so easy to make and secondly because it goes great with this level of cigar intensity and smoking time (approximately 30 minutes).



Photo credit: @Cigarilli



Photo credit: @CigarIli

The recipe for the Rum Old Fashioned was very simple:

- 3 oz. Ron Mulata 12 Años
- ½ oz. Brown Sugar Simple Syrup
- 1 Dash of Angostura Bitters
- Orange Peel as Garnish

The cocktail added a sweet dimension to the pairing, with its caramel notes. It was more noticeable at this point of the pairing with its citric aromas, which were very inviting and made you want to keep drinking it.

The cigar, on the other hand, kept burning evenly and its intensity kept increasing. I must say that it was a very pleasant pairing with a medium intensity. Half way through the smoking, we changed to another cigar line called Opera.

From the Opera line, Carlos presented me with a Fidelio, a Robusto with the same dimensions as the previous cigar, but with a few compositional differences: the wrapper was Cameroon, the filler had *Ecuador*, *Piloto Cubana* and *Olor Dominicano*. Here I found a more intense body, maybe it could have been best to start with a fresh cocktail with this cigar, because a half-consumed cocktail has been diluted quite a bit and it is possible it won't be strong enough by the time we get to the second third.

Unfortunately for Carlos, he had to leave to go to another appointment, so I decided to finish the Fidelio with a fresh cocktail (another Rum Old Fashioned as before). I was very pleased

with the intensity and flavor of the last third of the cigar.

There will soon be new additions to the same line: Rigoletto and Traviata, both will be box pressed, an uncommon format for Cuban cigars, but something that has been trending up in recent years, especially in the USA, due to its cooler draw.

Last but not least, there is Napoli, which I smoked prior to the pairing. It is a smaller format, ideal to have with an Espresso, with a smoking time of less than 10 minutes, very aromatic of dried fruits and pure cacao.

This was a very enjoyable experience for me, perhaps the rings are the only aspect I would criticize, but the tobaccos are highly recommendable. I was pleased for the opportunity to enjoy them and hope to be able to find these cigars in other places so they can be enjoyed by many other people as well. The brand will soon be available in other countries, it is already being distributed in Central America, hopefully our readers too will be able to find them.

We will definitely plan more events with Carlos at the bar, so we can continue exploring classic rum cocktail pairings.

Cheers!  
Philip Ili Barake  
#GRCigarPairing



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