Got Rum?

DECEMBER 2018 FROM THE GRASS TO YOUR GLASS, SINCE 2001!



COOKING WITH RUM - ANGEL'S SHARE - CIGAR & RUM - MUSE OF MIXOLOGY - RUM HISTORIAN - RUM IN THE NEWS - "GOT RUM?" TEAM INTERVIEW - ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS - RUM UNIVERSITY



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FRONT COVER: Holiday Drinking Buddies
INSIDE SPREAD: Refreshing Holiday Break

FROM THE EDITOR

Rum Lexicon

The dictionary defines Lexicon as "the vocabulary of a language, an individual speaker or group of speakers, or a subject." Doctors need a very specific lexicon, so they can communicate clearly and precisely about matters that may have life or death consequences. Attorneys do as well: anyone who's taken a look at a legal document understands this right away. Chemists, biologists and most other professions also have their own lexicons, which exist to clearly define concepts by removing ambiguity and vagueness.

For the most part, the words that make up a subject's lexicon are available to everyone, but average people are unaware of them mainly because they've never had to rely on them to communicate clearly.

One of our biggest challenges we face when talking to consumers, even with trade people, is their lack of rum lexicon, which can easily lead to misunderstandings. A few common examples are:

- "Rich," referring to the color, rather than to the congener level
- "Boozy" as an aromatic descriptor
- "Spicy" and "Rummy" as flavor descriptors

How many times have you bought a bottle of rum, based on someone's description (usually at the liquor store) or on the information on the label, but the rum was nothing close to what you described or was described to you?

If casual rum drinkers improve their lexicon and start asking better



questions at bars and liquor stores, then the trade will need to up its game too. This will lead to more training and better communication, which translates into happier consumers! Start by asking the distilleries behind the rums you like, especially the technical or production people, you may pick up a few new words!

Happy Holidays!

Luis Ayala, Editor and Publisher

Linked in

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!

Three Sheets Barrel Aged Rum

Cutwater Spirits, makers of the Three Sheets rums are a branch of the Ballast Point Spirits Company based in San Diego, California. The company ferments cane sugar to create their line of four rums using a combination of pot and column stills. The Bourbon Barrel aged expression is aged for two years in heavily charred virgin white oak barrels and blended to 40% ABV.

Appearance

The Three Sheets rum line comes in a tall 750 ml bottle. The front and back labels provide the basic information about the rum

The rum has a dark amber color in the bottle and glass. Swirling the spirit creates a thick band that spins off fast moving legs. The band evaporates quickly, leaving behind a ring of pebbles in its wake.

Nose

The aroma provides notes of caramelized vanilla, chocolate covered cherries, fresh ground tobacco, new tanned leather, roasted pecans and toasted oak.

Palate

Sipping the rum delivers is a swirl of chewy oak tannins, vanilla, tobacco leaf, cherry and nutmeg. As the flavors begin to fade, notes of black pepper and caramel form and linger in a medium finish.



It does not happen often, but everything about this rum reminds me of immature bourbon. While I really enjoyed the aroma, the flavors came up a bit short by comparison. The influence of the virgin oak tannins and sweet caramel flavors make this spirit perfect for any bourbon focused cocktails.

For me personally, the rum is a bit too raw for sipping neat, but for those who enjoy cigars they might find an interesting pairing experience. For dessert purposes this rum actually makes an excellent ingredient for Rum Balls. Just take your favorite Bourbon Ball recipe and substitute this rum.

Overall I was pleased with this release and want to explore the other rums in the Three Sheets line.



THE ANGEL'S SHARE

by Paul Senft

Foursquare Exceptional Cask 2005

In October of 2017 Foursquare Rum distillery premiered the sixth expression in their Exceptional Cask Series. The rum is created from distilled molasses using a pot still and a traditional twin column still. The rums were blended and aged for twelve years in used bourbon casks. Bottled at 59% ABV, this release was limited to 12,000 bottles worldwide. It slowly rolled out in the United States during 2018 and became one of the most sought after Barbados rums in the marketplace.

Appearance

All of the Exceptional Cask releases are delivered in the same style bottle. The label provides the details about the spirit and makes special note that no sugar or other additives are used to create the rum.

The rum has a dark amber color in the bottle that lightens slightly in the glass. Swirling the rum created a middle size band that thickened and dropped a couple of waves of slow moving legs. Eventually the bands evaporated, leaving behind a line of beads around the glass.

Nose

Pouring the rum in the glass filled the air with notes of caramelized vanilla, dried apricots and raisins. After the aroma settled, I smelled dark chocolate, dried orange peel, black pepper, and smoky oak tannins and dried parchment. An

interesting thing about this release is it reminded both my wife and I of what Foursquare Distillery smells like.

Palate

The first sip ignites the tongue and envelops it in a swirl of the signature notes of toffee and oak I associate with quite a few Foursquare rums. Subsequent sips reveal notes of black cherry, cooked bananas, cinnamon, allspice, cloves, and sugared ginger. As the flavors begin to fade notes of charred oak, toffee, tobacco leaf, and anise flavors merge and linger in a nice long finish.

Review

From the aroma reminding me of the distillery to the dynamic flavor profile it is no surprise to me that this rum won two Gold medals at different spirit competitions this year. The strength of the rum can be a bit overwhelming for some, but I personally found the multi layered complexity a fun exploration of a cask strength rum. Typical Foursquare products are blended around the 80 proof mark and considering how much I enjoyed the 2005 vintage it is my hope that we see more cask proof blends and releases from them. Foursquare Exceptional Cask 2005 met exceeded all my expectations.





@foursquare.rumdistillery

Would you like to see your rum reviewed here?

We don't charge fees to review rums, you don't even have to advertise, so what are you waiting for???

For more information, please send an email to: margaret@gotrum.com

COOKING WITH RUM

by Chef Susan Whitley



Hello, my name is Susan Whitley, I am passionate about great foods and beverages. I love finding recipes that incorporate my favorite ingredients and sharing the results with my friends and family.

Through this monthly column I will do my best to inspire you to incorporate the **spirit of the tropics** into your everyday cooking.

Sue@gotrum.com

Here are a couple of recipes that are sure to warm up your soul and your body. Bon appetit!!

Rum Consommé

Ingredients:

- 6 Cups Beef Broth
- 1 Cup Noodles (Fideos)
- ¼ Cup Dark Rum
- 1 Pinch each of basil, dill, thyme and tarragon
- Diced Green Onion
- Optional: Grated Cheese or Sour Cream

"Soup is cuisine's kindest course. It breathes reassurance; it steams consolation; after a weary day it promotes sociability, as the five o'clock cup of tea or the cocktail hour."

— Louis P. De Gouy

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Directions:

Put everything into a two quart saucepan and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

Let rest for one minute and serve in bowl and add green onions. Optional: add grated cheese or a spoonful of sour cream.

Serves 6.



Duck with Rum Marinade

Ingredients:

- 2 Ducks, 3-4 lbs., cut up
- 1 Pinch Nutmeg
- Salt & Pepper to taste
- 2 Medium White Onions, finely chopped
- 1 Garlic Clove, finely chopped
- ½ Cup Dark Rum
- ½ Cup Brandy
- ¼ Cup Red Wine
- 1 Pinch Dried Oregano

Directions:

Put the cut up duck and the rest of the ingredients into a deep bowl.

Allow to marinate for at least two hours, turning the duck pieces every 20 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place the duck in a baking pan, pour some of the marinade over the duck and wrap top of pan with foil. Place pan in the oven and bake for 45 minutes, basting periodically each piece with remaining marinade.

Serves 6.



THE RUM UNIVERSITY LABORATORY

www.RumUniversity.com

WITH CONTROLLING HEREIGH

+ C acidum Vitrioli

+ C. concentratum, d.dilutum

+Oacidum Nitri, Obanphlogistkalum

V Aqua fortis

+O acidum Salis Oto Sdephlogisticalum

R Aqua Regis

Acidum fluoris mineralis

odo acidum arfenici

+v. acidum Vegetabile

+ Acidum tartari

+ acidum Sacchari

A acetum

+a. acidum animale

+ acidum urinæ phosphori

15 Acidum Formicarum

A acidum aereum; almosphæricum

O Sal alcalinus

Op. Sal alc. purus (Causticus)

Ov. Alcali fixum vegetabile

Om. Alcali fixum minerale

A alcali volalile

₹ Jerra

₩ Lapis

: arena

* Calx, p. pura (uflulata)

YA Calz vitriolata (Jelénites, gipfum)

Y Jerra ponderoja
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making your own

Blackberry Rum Liqueur

Ingredients

For the simple syrup:

1 Cup of Water

1 Cup of Sugar

For the liqueur:

1 Lb. Fresh Blackberries, washed, stems and leaves removed

1 tsp. Fruit Protector

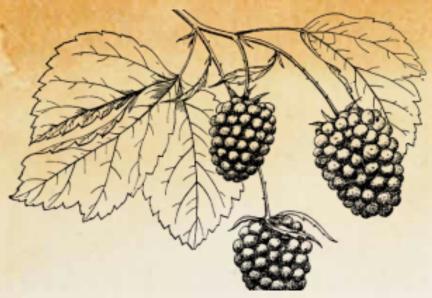
750 mL of High-Congener (heavy) White

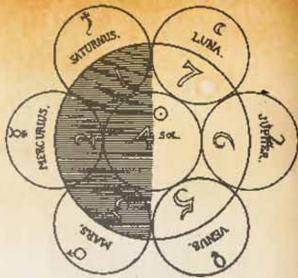
Preparation

Make the simple syrup by combining the sugar and water and bringing the mixture to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Once the sugar has been dissolved, set aside and allow it to cool until just warm.

Place the blackberries in a large bowl and crush them into a paste, using a potato masher or the back of a large wooden spoon. Add the fruit protector and let it sit for 2 hours.

Transfer into a large jar or wide-mouth





bottle and add the rum. Place the container in a dark and cool place and shake it at least once daily for 2-4 weeks.

You are now ready to strain out the solids, using a fine-mesh strainer or cheesecloth. You may have to repeat this process more than once, depending on the type of filter you use and how clean you want the final product.

Did you know that...

- Blackberries are an edible fruit of the Rosaceae family, which are commonly consumed raw, or in desserts, jellies, jams, pies, crumbles, and can even be made into wine.
- Blackberries, like most berries, are extremely high in antioxidants, fiber, and a variety of other health promoting nutrients.
- Blackberries are similar to raspberries except that they have larger seeds and when picked the torus (stem) remains attached to the blackberry, whereas when a raspberry is picked the stem stays on the plant.
- In the United Kingdom folklore stipulates that picking blackberries after October 11th (Old Michaelmas Day) should be avoided because the devil has made them rotten or poisonous by spitting or doing other damage to the berries.
- Other names for blackberries include lawers, thimbleberries, dewberries, and brambleberries.



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THE MUSE OF MIXOLOGY

by Cris Dehlavi

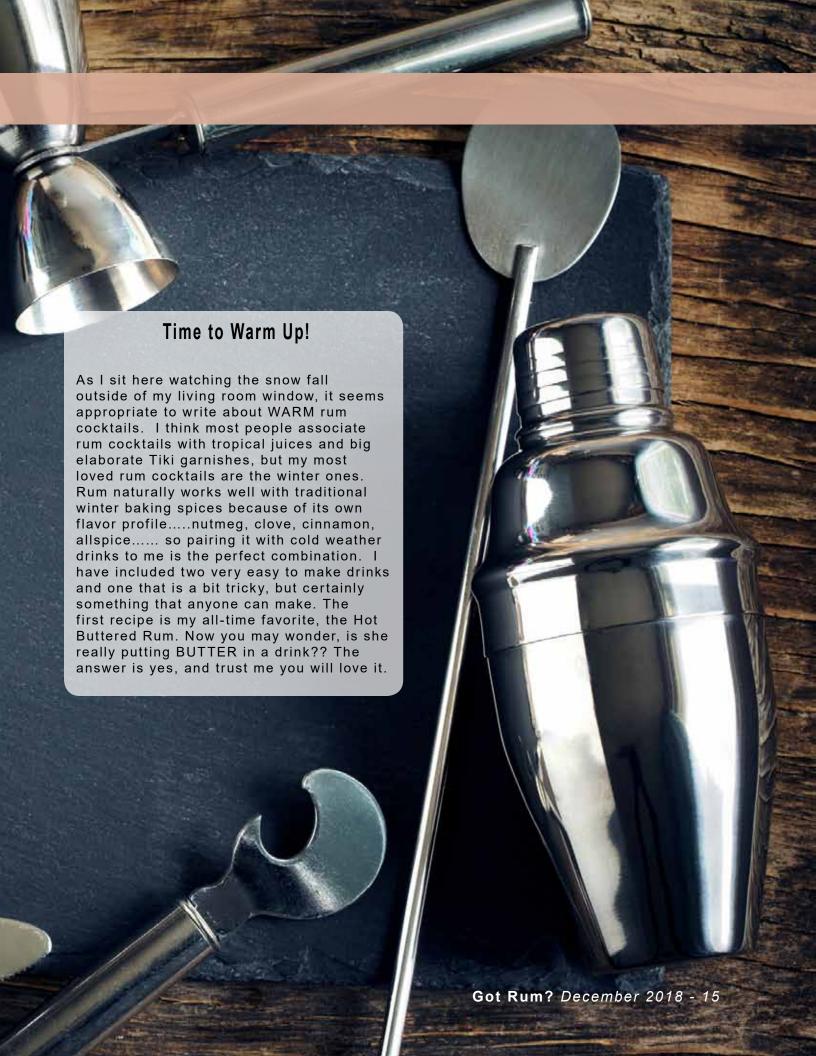




My name is Cris Dehlavi and I am a native of Arizona, but have lived in Columbus, Ohio for the past 16 years with my daughter, Desi. I have been running the bar program at "M", of the Cameron Mitchell Restaurant group since 2005. I am currently the Vice President of Columbus USBG as well as a consultant for bars and restaurants nationally.

In 2013, I attended the rigorous B.A.R. 5 Day Spirits Certification and have been recognized as one of the top mixologists in the U.S.A. I am one of the senior managers of the prestigious apprentice program at Tales of the Cocktail and work as a mentor to many bartenders around Ohio.

My contribution to Got Rum? magazine will include everything from reviews of national cocktail events, articles on mixology, garnish trends, recipes and techniques, to interviews with some of the leading bartenders in the industry.





Mix this very well by hand, then refrigerate. Remove from refrigerator one hour prior to making your hot buttered rum. You can freeze this as well, so that it is always available!

This next cocktail is something I made last week, kind of by accident....but what a wonderful accident it was! I taught a mixology class and one of the drinks was supposed to be an Irish Coffee. The venue forgot to order Irish Whiskey, so I grabbed a bottle of Myer's Dark Rum and used it instead. No offense to my Irish friends but I liked it much better! The best part about this drink is the contrast of hot coffee to cool whipped cream.

JAMAICAN COFFEE

In a large coffee mug add:

1 ½ oz Myer's Dark Rum

1 oz Brown sugar simple syrup

4 oz hot coffee

Top with one dollop of freshly whipped cream

Garnish with grated fresh nutmeg

Brown sugar simple syrup
In a saucepan add 2 cups of brown sugar to 2 cups of water. Add 2 cinnamon sticks and heat on medium low heat until the sugar is dissolved. Remove the cinnamon sticks and refrigerate.

Whipped cream

Always make this yourself, do not buy aerosol whipped cream! It is easy to make and so much better than anything store bought.

In a mixing bowl add 2 cups of heavy whipping cream and 1 cup of powdered sugar. With a hand mixer, begin mixing on the low setting. Add 10 drops of vanilla extract, and continue mixing until the cream becomes thick. Refrigerate for up to 3 days.

This last cocktail is my twist on a Hot Buttered Rum, served cold. It is a really fun cocktail to make and incredibly rich and delicious.

BROWN BUTTERED RUM

The first thing to do is make brown butter. Chop one stick of butter into four pieces and place in a saucepan. On medium heat, melt the butter, stirring frequently. As the butter begins to simmer, it will change to a dark brown color. As soon as this happens, remove from heat. There is a fine line between brown butter and burnt butter so watch it constantly. The butter will take on a lovely nutty aroma. Be careful because the butter will be very hot.

Next is what we in the mixing business call fat washing. This is how you infuse a fat (butter, bacon, etc...) into a spirit. Take one liter of rum (I like to do this one with El Dorado 12 year) and place into a shallow plastic container with a lid. Add one cup of brown butter, stir well, cover and freeze overnight. The next day you will remove this container from the freezer and see that the butter has risen to the top and is one solid chunk. Remove this hard layer of butter and discard. Pour the infused rum through a cheesecloth into a fresh container. Repeat this with a new cheesecloth 3 more times. This will remove any remnants of butter so that the rum does not feel greasy on your palate. You now have brown butter infused rum.

The Cocktail:

2 oz. Brown butter infused rum

1 oz Amaro Lucano

2 dashes Angostura bitters

Stir these ingredients well with ice, and strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with a cinnamon stick and enjoy your COLD version of a Hot Buttered Rum!

Cris

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DIY BITTERS

(Publisher's review) Used since the Middle Ages, bitters are made by combining various plant botanicals and/or spices with 100-proof alcohol and letting them sit until the bitter and medicinal qualities have been extracted. Just a small amount of the resulting liquid can then be used to stimulate the digestive system and promote healthy digestion. This is why "aperitifs" and "digestifs" are so popular--both then and now!

DIY (Do-It-Yourself) Bitters is a how-to guide that explores the history and health benefits of bitters, and shows you how to make your own bitters at home, to be used alone or in cocktails, tonics, and even main meals.

Herbalists Jovial King and Guido Mase, owners of the bitters company Urban Moonshine, teach you how to make recipes for classic bitters like orange and angostura, or explore more innovative bitters like elderflower-echinacea-honey and chocolate love tonic. You can even find a guide for creating your own unique flavors from the plants and ingredients you have on hand.

Whether enjoyed as an aperitif, digestif, or as a remedy to settle an upset stomach, bitters are back!

Jovial King is a family herbalist, cofounder & owner of Urban Moonshine (www. urbanmoonshine.com/), and author of DIY Bitters. She has studied herbal medicine extensively with an array of renowned teachers, including Rosemary Gladstar, Brigitte Mars, and Christopher Hobbs. Jovial started Urban Moonshine in her kitchen and has grown the company into a strong presence within the natural supplements industry. She has appeared as an Herbal Expert blogger for Martha Stewart's Whole Living website, and Urban Moonshine has been featured in Food & Wine, Mother Earth Living, Fine Cooking, Imbibe, Epicurious, and more.



Guido Mase RH(AHG) is a clinician and educator in the Western herbal tradition. He spent his childhood in Italy and has been living in Vermont since 1996. His practice interweaves clinical experience, mythology, and science. He is chief herbalist at Urban Moonshine, clinician at the Burlington Herb Clinic, faculty member and clinical supervisor at the Vermont Center for Integrative Herbalism, teacher in herbal medicine at the University of Vermont, and author of The Wild Medicine Solution and DIY Bitters. He is developing the integrative phytotherapy department at Wasso Hospital in Loliondo, Tanzania.

Hardcover: 208 pages, Fair Winds Press. ISBN-13: 978-1592337040

RUM

and the





Protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility. Rum producers, cane growers, sugarcane mills, distributors, retailers, mixologists, brand ambassadors and consumers all have the power to make or to influence change.

Earlier this year we called on our readers to nominate companies or individuals who are doing a great job running their businesses in an environmentally-friendly way. The response was overwhelming, we had a hard time narrowing down the nominees to the four winners showcased in the following pages.

Out goal is for this to be the beginning of an annual tradition, designed to recognize environmental excellence in the rum industry, so please continue to send in your nominations.



Lord Byron Distillery egory DISTILLERY -

Category

Carbon-Neutral

Zero Waste

Australia Country

We are extremely proud of Lord Byron Distillery and the Restall family: not only have they achieved Carbon-Neutral and Zero Waste status, but they did so starting day one of operation!

It takes a great deal of planning and an iron will to aim for -and to achieve- this level of environmental respect. And the rums they produce are quite delicious too!

www.lordbyrondistillery.com.au





Montanya Distillers			
Category	DISTILLERY -		
	 Leadership 		

Being "environmentally friendly" can mean different things to different people. For Karen Hoskin (CEO and co-owner) it means walking the walk, going as far as inspecting the distillery's trash to make sure employees are not throwing away items that should have been recycled!

U.S.A.

Thanks to Karen's efforts, Montanya Distillers is now the first distillery in Colorado -and only the third in the USA- to become a Certified B Corporation!

www.montanyadistillers.com

Country





Assukkar, S. A.		
Category	SUGAR MILL -	
	• Organic	
Country	Costa Rica	

Processing sugarcane to make crystalized sugar is an arduous task and the profits are never guaranteed. We are very pleased to have seen Assukkar's operations first-hand and their devotion to organic sugar, which requires certification of the harvested lands, as well as, the sugarcane mill and the storage warehouse.

Organic has proven to be the value-added differentiator that allows Assukkar to thrive, even when larger sugar mills struggle.

www.assukkar.com





















Drake's Organic Spirits Category SPIRITS BRAND Organic Country U.S.A.

Drake's Organic Spirits earned its award by demonstrating that it was possible to launch an organic-certified line of spirits that is both excellent AND affordable.

Drake's offerings include USDA Organic Certified Rum and Vodka, which are Gluten Free, Non GMO Project Verified, Vegan and OU Kosher Certified. All their products have been awarded top medals, proving that one does not need to sacrifice taste or affordability to be organic.

www.drakesorganicspirits.com



Drake's Organic Spirits



Drake's Organic Vodka





Drake's Organic Spirits
 Drake's White Rum



Double Gold Best Rum (White)









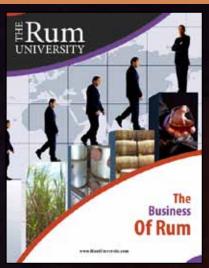




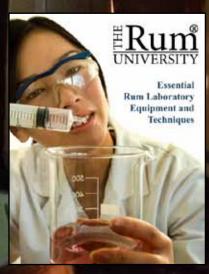
In Association With



5-Day Rum Course: February 4th-8th 2019, Kentucky, USA





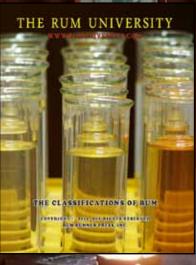




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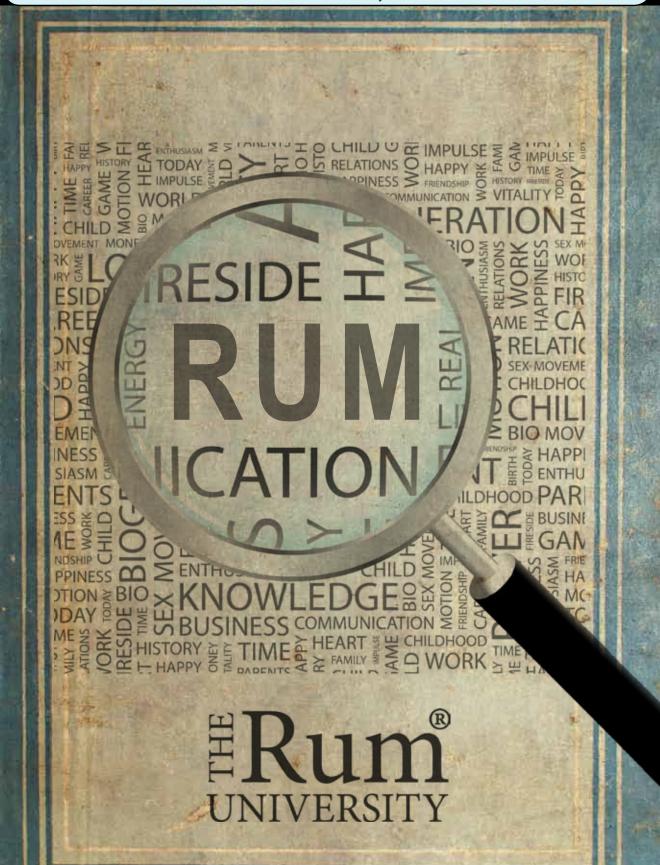






THE RUM BIOGRAPHY

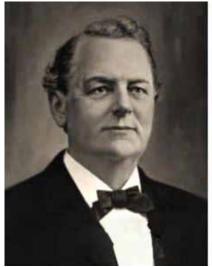
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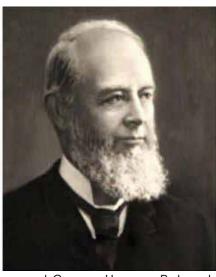


he rum industry owes its present success to many people who, through their vision, wisdom, ingenuity and/or dedication, were able to innovate or improve existing processes. In this new series we will explore these individuals, to honor their memories and to -hopefully- inspire a new generation of game-changers.

Featured Biography: George Babcock and Steven Wilcox

Stephen Wilcox (February 12, 1830 - Nov. 27, 1893) and his good friend George Babcock (June 17, 1832 - December 16, 1893) first met when Babcock's family moved to Wilcox's home town of Westerly, Rhode Island, U.S.A. The friends went separate ways as they entered adulthood, but later reunited in Providence as business collaborators. Wilcox's work with a water-tube boiler (which he improved with the help of his friend) paved the





(L to R) Portraits of Steven Wilcox and George Herman Babcock. Source: Babcock and Wilcox, established in 1867.

way for electric-generating plants and for efficient and safe locomotive and ship engines.

Stephen Wilcox showed his talent as an inventor from a very early age, and after a public school education and apprenticeship, he began studying machines to see if he could improve them as well as thinking about new ways to build new machines. At the young age of 23, Wilcox received his first patent, for a hotair engine for a lighthouse to produce fog signals (by the time of his death, the number of patents awarded to him was close to 50!). Shortly after his first patent, Wilcox turned his attention to developing an improved, safer boiler (boilers are boxes that use internal fire to heat water into steam). In those days, boiler explosions were very common and often ended tragically. Wilcox's improved water-tube boiler design featured increased heating surfaces that allowed for better water circulation. This, in turn, reduced the risk of explosion inherent in the earlier designs. Although the boiler wasn't perfect, it was safer and more efficient than anything in existence, and Wilcox was granted a patent in 1856.

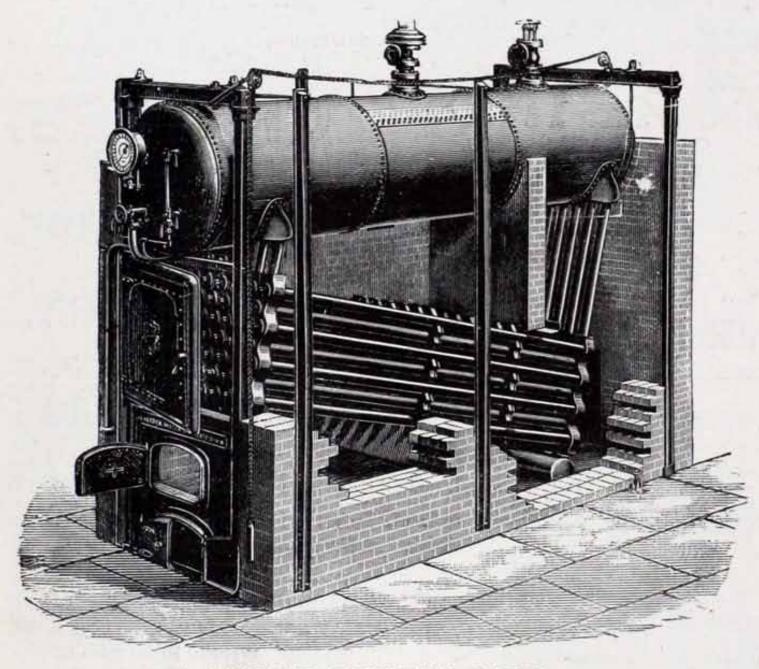
Within the next few years, Wilcox met up again with Babcock and they began working together to improve Wilcox's water-tube boiler. They believed that there would be increasing demand for steam-powered locomotives and engines for manufacturing once the Civil War ended. In 1867, they received additional patents for engine, pump, and boiler designs, and they formed Babcock & Wilcox

BABCOCK & WILCOX, LD.

ENGINEERS and MANUFACTURERS of

WATER TUBE STEAM BOILERS,

2,000,000 HORSE POWER IN USE.



EUROPEAN WORKS AND OFFICES:

RENFREW, near GLASGOW.

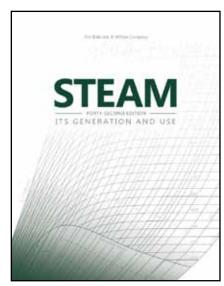
LONDON: 147, Queen Victoria Streat, E.C. CLASCOW: 21, St. Vincent Place.

MANCHESTER: 28, Deansgate. PARIS: 15, Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin.

to manufacture and sell their products. The **Babcock & Wilcox Non-Explosive Boiler**, as it was called then, used tubing to generate higher pressures and was more efficient than earlier designs. It became standard for all large boilers because of its ability to safely handle higher steam pressures.

When Thomas Edison began his work on electricity in the late 1870s, the inventor bought a Babcock & Wilcox boiler and later used it in a public demonstration of incandescent lighting. The boilers also powered two of the country's first central electrical stations in Philadelphia and New York in the early 1880s. In 1888, Edison wrote that his B&W boiler was "the best boiler God has permitted man yet to make."

A book written by the two partners in 1875, called "Steam: It's Generation and Use," outlining the requirements for design or construction of a perfect steam boiler, showed their understanding and insight of the basic principles of what it takes to make a durable and efficient steam generator. The standards they put forth represent best practices even today, and their book has become one of the longest continuously published texts of its kind with periodic updates from the Babcock & Wilcox Co. The 42nd edition was published in 2015 and includes new topics such as environmental protection and emissions control.



Wilcox retired in 1881 but continued carrying out experiments in several areas and received patents on numerous engines and parts over the next decade. In

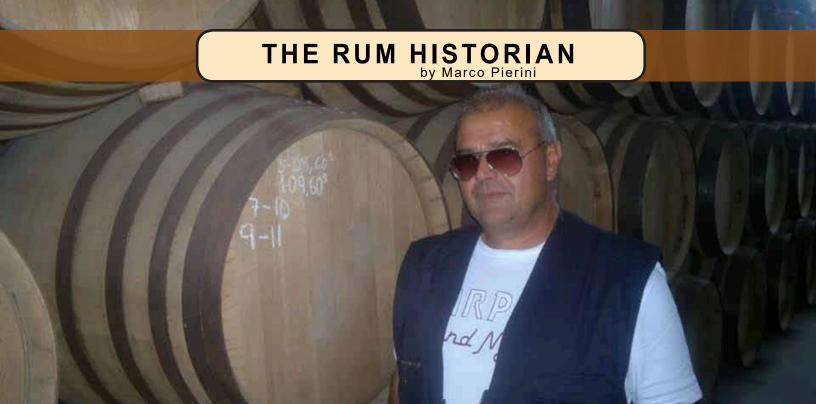
1889, he produced a marine water-tube boiler which was installed in a yacht he had built and named the Reverie. Marine boilers based on his designs eventually powered U.S. and British naval ships.

Wilcox died on Nov. 27, 1893, and 19 days later, his long-time friend and business partner Babcock passed away.

Did you know that...

- ... sugarcane fibers (bagasse) is burnt as fuel to produce steam?
- ... steam is used to move heavy machinery as sugar mills, such as sugarcane presses, conveyor belts and pumps?
- ... steam is used to evaporate excess water from the freshly-squeezed cane juice, to create crystalized sugar?
- ... steam from sugar mills is used to operate adjacent distilleries, thus avoiding the need for the distilleries to have their own heaters and fuel?
- ... surplus steam from the mills is used to generate the electricity needed to operate mills, distilleries and often to sell back to the grid?





y name is Marco Pierini, I was born in 1954 in a little town in Tuscany (Italy) where I still live. In my youth, I got a degree in Philosophy in Florence and I studied Political Science in Madrid, but my real passion has always been History and through History I have always tried to understand the world, and men.

Life brought me to work in tourism, event organization and vocational training. Then I founded *La Casa del Rum*, to run a beach bar and select Premium Rums in Italy and I fell in love with Rum.

Through Rum, I have finally returned to my initial passion: History, 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 has a terrible and fascinating history, made of slaves and planters, imperial fleets and revolutions.

All this I try to cover in my Blog: www.therumhistorian.com.

In 2017 I published my first rum related book: AMERICAN RUM. A Short History of Rum in Early America.

AND IF IT WERE THE FRENCH CARIBBEAN THE FIRST CRADLE OF RUM?

2. ADAM'S WILL

In the first article of this new series dedicated to the role played by the French in the origins of rum, in November, I published some documents according to which a commercial production of rum may have started in Saint-Christophe, Martinique and other French islands a few years before it did in Barbados. I hope to be able to publish other documents in the next articles.

But in order to understand historic documents properly it is not sufficient to just read them. We have to contextualize them, that is, put them in their proper historical period. In this case, we are referring to texts written in 1600s by French missionaries and travelers who wanted to tell about, and often actively promote, the colonization of the Caribbean. Both they and their readers were interested in American nature, the natives and their costumes, the new society arising on the

islands and in the riches that could be amassed from those lands. The production of spirits was a matter of little interest to them and they gave it only scattered observations, not specific reflection.

Let us say, yet again simplifying, that it is up to us to do some precise thinking. The first step is to understand how much the French knew about and how often they went to America in the 1620s and 1630s, at the time of their first permanent settlements in Saint-Chritophe, Martinica, Guadalupe etc.

Let's see. In 1494, just two years after Columbus' first voyage, Portugal and Spain signed the Treaty of Tordesillas under which the newly discovered lands would be divided between the two signatories. But France never accepted this Iberian monopoly and, from the very beginning, French seamen, merchants, privateers and pirates showed a keen awareness of the opportunities and wealth that could be derived from the new discoveries.

Later, after the Spanish conquest of Mexico and Peru, the sensational news of Aztec and Incan treasures whetted other European appetites, especially those of Spain's enemies. First of all France, which was at war with the Spanish Empire for roughly all the first half of the 1500s. Wars are expensive. The fleets coming back from America loaded with treasure were vital to ensure the wealth and consequently the military power of the Spanish empire; for this reason the Spanish towns and ships of America became subject to constant attack by the French.

As Philip P. Boucher writes in his seminal work FRANCE AND THE AMERICAN TROPICS TO 1700, "The French king François I (r. 1516 – 1547) vociferously refused to honor Iberian pretension to monopoly on America. In an oft-quoted anecdote, he reputedly asked the Spanish ambassador to produce Adam's will leaving the Americas to Iberians. He insisted that legitimate claims to areas overseas depended on de facto occupation, not on grandiose papal grants. ... Not only did François support voyages searching for a northwest passage to the Orient, the

expeditions of Giovanni da Verrazzano, Jacques Cartier, and Jean Roberval, but during these years of almost continuous war, he unleashed privateers in the Caribbean."

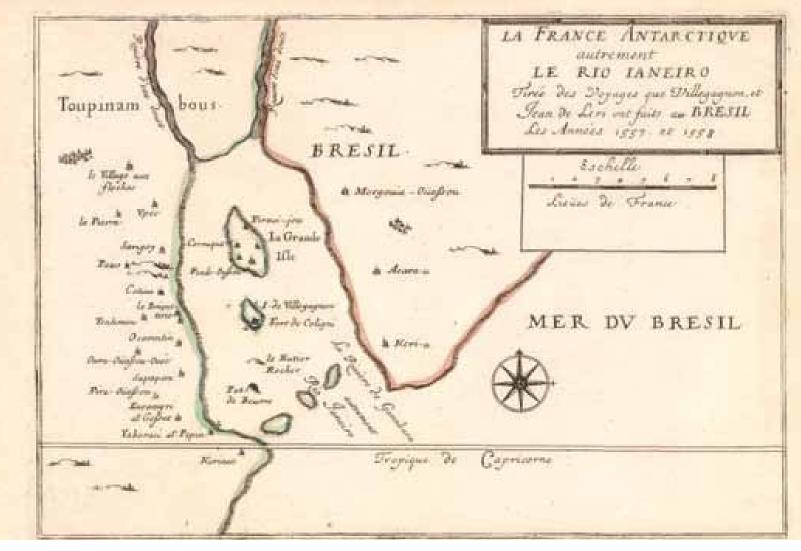
French privateer attacks achieved spectacular success, one of the earliest being the 1523 capture of Spanish ships carrying the stolen treasures of the Aztec city Tenochtitlan off the coast of the Azores by Jean d'Ango, a wealthy ship owner from Dieppe. Later, in 1555, the French privateer Jacques de Sores captured Havana and burned it to the ground. Only the terrible religious and civil wars that tore apart and bled France dry in the second half of 1500s prevented the French Crown from establishing enduring colonies in America.

This it enough for the French connection with America in general; now let's focus on Brazil, which roughly from 1550s to 1650s was the biggest producer of sugar in the West world.

French captain Binot Paulmier de Gonneville, in 1504 onboard L'Espoir, visited Brazil and traded with the natives. He also brought back to France a Native American person named Essomericq. Gonneville stated that when he visited Brazil, French traders from Saint-Malo and Dieppe had already been trading there for several years.

We know from contemporary sources that from the very beginning of the settlement, the Portuguese were worried about the presence in Brazil of other Europeans, first of all the French. Let me quote Schwartz, S.B. EARLY BRAZIL. A DOCUMENTARY COLLECTION TO 1700: "The Portuguese Crown made efforts to clear foreign competitors, especially Norman and Breton ships, from the coast, and to that end Martin Alonso de Sousa captained an expedition in 1532 that sought to ensure Portugal's control of the new land."

France continued to trade with Portugal, especially loading Brazil wood, for its use as a red dye for textiles. The fascination that Brazil and its inhabitants exerted on the French was very strong, to the point



Ancient map of France Antartique.

that in 1550, during the great celebrations for the royal entry of King Henry II at Rouen, about fifty men disguised as naked Brazilian natives staged a battle between the Tupinamba allies of the French and their enemies, the Tabajaras.

The French ambitions on Brazil were not limited to trade, they also tried to colonize it.

The first French settlement in Brazil was called *France Antartique*. In 1555, French vice-admiral Nicolas Durand de Villegaignon, a Catholic knight of the Order of Malta, led a small fleet of two ships and 600 soldiers and colonists, and took possession of the small island of Serigipe in the Guanabara Bay, in front of present-day Rio de Janeiro, where they built a fort. In 1560 Mem de Sá, the new Governor-General of Brazil, received from the Portuguese government the order to expel the French. With a large fleet he attacked

the French colony. The strong religious tensions that existed, in the colony and at home, between French Protestants and Catholics, weakened the defense and delayed the dispatch of reinforcements from France. In January 1567, the Portuguese inflicted a final defeat on the French forces and decisively expelled them from Brazil. In the place, the Portuguese founded the city of Rio de Janeiro.

A second settlement was *France Équinoxiale*, started in 1612, when a French expedition departed from France, carrying 500 colonists. They arrived in the Northern coast of what is today the Brazilian state of Maranhão where they soon founded a village, which was named "Saint-Louis", in honor of the French king Louis IX. The colony did not last long: a Portuguese army defeated and expelled the French colonists in 1615. A few years later, in 1620, Portuguese and Brazilian colonists arrived in number and São Luís



French Buccaneers sacking a city on Spanish Main, detail.

started to develop, with an economy based mostly on sugar cane and slavery. Actually, it was largely in response to the attempts of France to trade with the natives and to conquer new territories that the Portuguese crown decided to expand its colonization efforts in Brazil.

French traders and colonists tried again to found a colony further North, in what is today French Guyana, in 1626, 1635 and 1643. It was only after 1674, when the colony came under the direct control of the French crown and a competent Governor took office, that *France Équinoxiale* became a reality. To this day, French Guyana is a department of France.

To sum up, according to W.J. Eccles in his THE FRENCH IN NORTH AMERICA, "For a century, French traders had challenged the Portuguese hold of this vast region, with little or no aid from the Crown. But for the religious dissensions at Rio de

Janeiro, and the unfortunate character of Villegaignon, France rather than Portugal might have established a vast empire in South America."

Therefore, in the 1620s and 1630s, when the French began to settle in the Caribbean, they knew America and its resources well. In particular, they had a long experience of travelling to and trading with Brazil, a great producer of sugar and where, at least from the beginning of 1600s, rum was produced too. This part of the historic context of our documents is sufficiently clear.

What remains to be seen now is whether the French already knew alcoholic distillation, sugarcane cultivation and sugar making.

See you again in the next issues.

Marco Pierini



The Rum University - Level I - Panama City, Panama

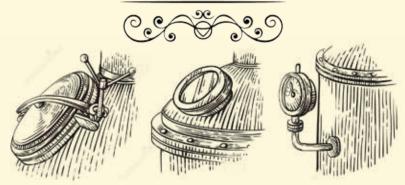
In November 2018, Philip IIi Barake, Cigar Sommelier and Certified Rum University Instructor, hosted Level I training in Panama City, Panama, Central America. The course included rum classifications (classic and new), paired with tastings and mixology applications.

During the 3 days of training, students were immersed in the world of rum, exploring their differences based on raw materials and distillation methods, always connecting the results with mixology aimed at preserving and highlighting the different styles.

New dates and locations are currently being planned for Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Peru.







Available for Immediate Shipping:

10,000 liter (2,650 gallon), used Chalvignac copper pot still, designed for distilling Brandy or High-Congener (heavy) Rum.

This is a large, traditional onion-shaped copper pot/kettle with an onion-shaped copper hat and a copper swan's neck. It also features:

- New machine-welded, insulated boiler pedestal with stainless steel access stair and ramp.
- New valves, gauges and copper parrot (alcohol meter holder).
- New gas burner, latest generation, efficient and safe.
- New cabling, exhaust chimney and electric installation.
- New heating management cabinet.
- New condenser with new coils and exhaust piping.

If ordering new, the manufacturer's turnaround time would be 11-12 months, but you can get this beauty shipped to you in about a month and for 25% less than the cost of a new one. Don't delay, act now, there is only

Photo shows similar still, not the actual one for sale

one available and it will not be around for long.

For additional information, please send an e-mail to: marketplace@rumcentral.com, subject line "Chalvignac Used Pot Still" and include your name, company name and phone number.



RUM IN THE NEWS

by Mike Kunetka

NEWS

MONTANYA DISTILLERS

Montanya Distillers is proud to announce it is now a Certified B Corporation®. The distinction honors the rum distillery's commitment to social and environmental sustainability. This certification makes Montanya Distillers the first distillery in Colorado to become a B Corp™ and the third in the country. There are more than 2,500 companies from more than 130 industries and 50+ countries that have earned B Corp status, all with a unifying goal to redefine success in business. The performance standards B Corps meet are comprehensive, transparent, and verified. B Lab reviews and verifies many indicators such as the sourcing of ingredients, energy efficiency practices, trash and waste, non-GMO claims, employee benefits, community donations, diversity hiring practices, carbon emissions mitigation and more. Unlike traditional corporations, Certified B Corporations measure a company's impact on all its stakeholders from employees and suppliers to the community, its customers, and the environment. It's like a Fair Trade certification, but for the whole business not a single product.

Montanya answered about 200 questions regarding its business and then B Lab verified those answers. The minimum standard needed for certification is 80 points; Montanya received a score of 119. "It is one thing to say you operate a sustainable, environmentally responsible distillery. It is another thing to have B Lab verify your claims in such a rigorous way. It takes the guesswork out for the public, so they can be completely confident in our claims," said Karen Hoskin, Montanya's co-founder and owner. "I shop using the B-Corp directory because I know what the certification means about a business, its practices and supply chains. I have wanted for years to join the ranks of certified businesses that are a true force for good in the world.

We did it!" Montanya Distillers, located in Crested Butte, Colorado, is a craft rum distillery in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. Its distilling process uses old-world artisan traditions, combining science with art. B Lab is a nonprofit organization that serves a global movement of people using business as a force for good. Its vision is that one day all companies compete not only to be the best in the world, but the Best for the World® and as a result society will enjoy a more shared and durable prosperity.

www.MontanyaRum.com

LONEWOLF SPIRITS

Independent craft brewer BrewDog has appointed David Gates as Managing Director of BrewDog Distilling. David brings 27 years of experience in the industry to the burgeoning team, as BrewDog continues in its mission to redefine the spirits industry, establishing a new standard for distillation with craft and quality at its heart. The appointment comes as BrewDog's distilling arm, LoneWolf, revealed its plans to expand its spirit range beyond its vodka and gin to encompass whisky and rum, and an evolved strategic position that aligns with the brand's mission. David will be instrumental in driving forward LoneWolf's belief in challenging the notion of what spirits can be by putting craftsmanship back into spirits. He brings with him a wealth of experience from his time at Diageo, where he worked for 27 years and departed earlier this year as Managing Director of Diageo Futures. He was instrumental in driving growth of Diageo's Premium Core spirits portfolio, which accounts for 50% of the company's total net sales. During his time as Global Whisky Category Director, he established steady and sustained growth for Scotch Whisky and as Johnnie Walker Global Brand Director, he led the brand in becoming the most profitable international spirits brand in

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 an email to Mike@gotrum.com. Mike Kunetka is a land-locked rum enthusiast, he is based in Colorado, USA.

the world. Expanding the core spirits portfolio is at the forefront of LoneWolf's agenda. BrewDog cofounder, James Watt commented: "David is as obsessed with quality and flavor as we are. His proven success in building an established spirits division makes him a force to be reckoned with in the industry; I'm thrilled to have him on board. I can't wait to see where David takes LoneWolf. He shares our vision in standing as a marker and custodian of purist, truthful distillation methods, and his fresh, challenging thinking will not only take LoneWolf to new levels, but the entire category."

www.lonewolfspirits.com

RUMS OF PUERTO RICO

Along with members of Puerto Rican distilleries and other representatives of the rum industry on the island, the secretary of the Department of Economic Development and Commerce (DEDC), Manuel A. Laboy Rivera and the executive director of Rums of Puerto Rico, Alexandra Salgado Colón, launched the Rums of Puerto Rico promotional campaign, "The Rum Standard" at the Casita de Rones de Puerto Rico in Old San Juan. The program presented the new advertising campaign and the relaunch of the RumCapital.com website that will serve as a tool to expand the knowledge base of rum in Puerto Rico. "We are confident that with this campaign, the production, sale, and export of Puerto Rican rums will continue to grow. With this promotional effort we aim to increase the number of people in the world who know and love Puerto Rican rum. We will present it at events where we participate, in and out of Puerto Rico, and through the various networks of the Government of Puerto Rico that promote the island internationally. The commitment of our administration and Governor Ricardo Rosselló Nevares, is to continue supporting this industry because it is a high quality local product that has gained international recognition," said Laboy Rivera. On her part, the Rums of Puerto Rico executive director said "it is an honor for me to share the final product of a team effort, carried out with pride and with the satisfaction that it will contribute to the international promotion of Puerto Rican rums and, therefore, the economic development of the Island ".

Meanwhile, the DEDC Secretary stressed that this industry generates more than \$300 million annually to the local economy and represents 700 direct jobs in rum distilleries.

"We are convinced that the Puerto Rican rum industry can increase its contribution to the development of our economy. We will continue to support it because it is a local product of great quality that has gained international recognition. It has enormous possibilities of growth. And we will continue working to make it so. This promotional campaign is part of that effort. And, the best thing is that the protagonists are the hard-working hands, that for decades have taken this industry to the place it now occupies," emphasized Laboy Rivera. The campaign consists of seven videos, five minutes each, that summarize the history and the process of making each rum. And a one-minute video that summarizes what the Rums of Puerto Rico brand is all about. The videos highlight that the rums of Puerto Rico are the best in the world, not only due to their flavor, but because their confection is in the best hands and follow processes regulated by law that guarantee the highest quality. Also, the content highlights the years of experience gained in the development of this product; the "creators of a superior spirit." The campaign emphasizes that the Rums of Puerto Rico are the example to follow - "When it comes to rums, this is the standard rum." rumcapital.com

SAINT JAMES

Saint James recently released its latest vintage rhum, L'Essentiel. The concept of vintage rhums at the SAINT JAMES Distillery dates back to 1885 when the first ever vintage rhum was created. Strengthened by this long expertise, Master Distiller Marc Sassier created this sumptuous cuvée by selecting and blending three SAINT JAMES iconic vintage rhums: Vintage 1998 (Interesting structure with typical notes of very old rhums); Vintage 2000 (Particularly fruity); and Vintage 2003 (Woody notes and fern). Patiently aged 12 years in selected small Bourbon casks, this rhum has not been modified with "ullage" (topping up casks with eau-de-vie to compensate the natural evaporation, or angels share). A

RUM IN THE NEWS (continued)

by Mike Kunetka

NEWS

pure expression of the SAINT JAMES Rhums identity and a tribute to an exceptional legacy, L'Essentiel was elected best Agricole Rhum at the 2018 International Rum Conference in Madrid.

www.saintjames-rum.com

DIAGEO

Diageo has agreed to the sale of nineteen brands, including Myer's Rum and Parrot's Bay Rum, in an agreement with Sazerac for an aggregate consideration of \$550 million. The net proceeds of approximately £340 million, after tax and transaction costs, will be returned to shareholders through a share repurchase following completion, which will be incremental to the previously announced program of up to £2bn. The transaction, which is subject to regulatory approval, is expected to complete early in 2019. Ivan Menezes, Chief Executive of Diageo, said: "Diageo has a clear strategy to deliver consistent efficient growth and value creation for our shareholders. This includes a disciplined approach to allocating resources and capital to ensure we maximize returns over time. Today's announcement is another example of this strategy in action. The disposal of these brands enables us to have even greater focus on the faster growing premium and above brands in the US spirits portfolio." The other brands included in the transaction are Seagram's VO, Seagram's 83, Seagram's Five Star, Romana Sambuca, Popov, Yukon Jack, Goldschlager, Stirrings, The Club, Scoresby, Black Haus, Peligroso, Relska, Grind, Piehole, Booth's and John Begg.

FLOR DE CAÑA

Fair Trade USA, the leading certifier of Fair Trade products in North America, welcomed Flor de Caña premium rum to the Fair Trade community after certifying that

the raw ingredients used in the production of the Nicaraguan rum are produced under rigorous social and environmental standards covering areas like safe working conditions, protection of fundamental human rights and environmental best practices. Flor de Caña is proud of its partnership with Fair Trade USA to bring Fair Trade Certified rum to the global community by mid 2018. This certification not only raises the bar for the global spirits industry, but also assures consumers that with every purchase of Fair Trade Certified Flor de Caña rum, the workers earn a financial premium called the Community Development Fund. Workers vote together on how to use this money for projects of their choosing. It could be a health clinic, a school, scholarship funds, environmental projects, or anything the community identifies as a pressing need. This is the Fair Trade difference -our everyday choices, empowering others to improve their lives on their own terms. "In the spirits industry, the trend toward environmental sustainability and social responsibility is just beginning," said Paul Rice, President & CEO of Fair Trade USA. "Flor de Caña is one of the early trailblazers in this space, and is one of just a few spirits companies to adopt Fair Trade practices in their supply chain. We're excited by this partnership and the ripple effect that it's poised to create." Sustainable growth has been a core value of Flor de Caña throughout its 125-year history, with a holistic focus on the Environment, Employees and Community. Flor de Caña's commitment to the environment can be seen through the company's industryleading practices - the rum has been distilled using 100% renewable energy for over a decade. For the past 12 years, the team at Flor de Caña has planted 50,000 trees annually to help protect the environment.

Since 1913 the company school offers free education to the 600 children of its employees and since 1958 the company hospital offers

free medical attention to its employees and their families (over 2,500 births to date). Beyond the employees, Flor de Caña has long focused on the community around them, the people of Nicaragua. For more than 25 years, the brand has been the main donor of APROQUEN, a Nicaraguan non-profit founded in 1991, that has provided over 500,000 free medical services to child burn victims and children with cleft lip or palate. Flor de Caña joins more than 1,300 companies across the globe working to bring over 30 different Fair Trade product categories to market. In addition to rum, shoppers can find Fair Trade Certified coffee, tea, cocoa, sugar, produce, seafood, apparel, home goods and much more. Since 1998, Fair Trade USA and its partners have delivered over \$500 million in financial impact to producers around the world. www.flordecana.com.

ANGOSTURA

he House of Angostura® announced the newest addition to its award-winning Cask Collection, No. 1 Oloroso Sherry. Only 16,200 bottles will be made available in select markets worldwide. This is the third edition from Angostura's Cask Collection, a range of limited edition which is entirely dedicated to rums matured in different types of casks. The Cask Collection celebrates the House of Angostura's® rich heritage and artistry in blending some of the world's finest rums, and is a testament to Don Carlos Siegert, son of the brand's founder, whose dream it was to make the "smoothest blend in the new world." "Angostura® Cask Collection No.1 Oloroso Sherry is a masterwork, a one-of-a-kind rum that reaches the highest achievement in the rum world - an exquisite roundness and smoothness without sacrificing personality," says Angostura's Chief Executive Officer, Genevieve Jodhan. Bottled at 40% and the first rum that Angostura® has matured in sherry casks, Angostura® Cask Collection No. 1 Oloroso Sherry has been created with a fusion of techniques learned from the Old World and perfected in the New World. This silky smooth, complex rum is a beautiful amber with superb clarity. Warm, rounded aromas and a delicate nose of cocoa, molasses, oak and sweet prune inform the well-rounded blend, which offers flavors of woodiness, roasted nuts and hints of sherry, and a medium rounded and oaky finish. "The House of Angostura® has been experimenting with ageing rum in different types of casks

and techniques for many years, but this is the first time we have used Oloroso Sherry Casks to mature one of our rums," says Angostura's Marketing Executive Natasha Mustapha Scott, "We wanted to explore the results of a rum aged in American oak with extended time in an Oloroso Sherry Cask — in this case the blend of aged rums was finished for nine more months in Oloroso Sherry Casks." This is the third rum in the Angostura® Cask Collection. Each limited edition introduced into the range offers the recipient a first-time experience, that cannot be replicated after the bottles have been sold. The predecessors of No. 1 Oloroso Sherry, No. 1 First Fill Bourbon (2013) and No. 1 French Oak (2015), both won the coveted Rum Journal Rum of the Year Award. www.angostura.com.

MAHALAT SPIRITS

Just in time for the holiday season, Malahat Spirits has announced their new Barrel Club! Since founding the company in 2012, Malahat Spirits have been committed to hand crafting the highest quality spirits using only the finest ingredients they could find. They never imagined that just a few years later they would have a such a large and dedicated group of friends, who are just as excited as they are about the spirits running through their stills and their barrels. As demand for their products has increased, it has become more and more difficult to allocate the most select and small batch offerings. Upon release, the single barrel, cask strength, and experimental blends often sell out very quickly, sometimes before hitting the tasting room floor. This new membership will ensure that our most limited and unique offerings make it into the hands of our biggest fans. The Malahat Barrel Club Annual Membership will include: Four bottles of member exclusive single barrel, cask strength, or experimental spirits; Complimentary tastings for the member and a guest; Priority access to all Malahat releases during 2019; Member's only t-shirt; 15% off all purchases at the Malahat Tasting Room. Due to the limited nature of the spirits we will be releasing to our barrel club, we will be limiting the program to the first 100 members. To purchase this annual membership for yourself or a loved one, visit the Barrel Club Membership page on their website. www.malahatspirits.com

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"GOT RUM?" TEAM INTERVIEW

by Margaret Ayala

THE KEY TO SUCCESS IS

TEAM WORK

This issue is dedicated to the best team Luis and I could have ever hoped for (in alphabetical order):

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

And to all the "Got Rum?" readers around the world ... a big CHEERS to all!

Margaret Ayala, Publisher



Putting together a monthly magazine is not an easy task. Thankfully for us, we have the world's best contributing writers, who tirelessly produce content for us, month after month. It is easy, however, for readers to lose track of the people behind the stories, so each December we reserve space for all contributors to share a bit of information about themselves, their achievements, goals and observations.

This year we are also doing something a bit different: Mike Kunetka asked if he could interview Luis and me, a "behind the scenes" type of interview. With this in mind, Mike flew to Texas in October and spent some time with us, both at home and at Rum Central.



I am writing these lines on the morning of Thanksgiving, ahead of the arrival of my family and before the start of the cooking marathon that we are sure to undertake. As I look back at everything that has happened this year, I am thankful for all the rum consumers out there, who keep the dream alive for brand owners and distillers. I am also thankful for all the people working on the sugarcane fields: tilling the soil, planting the cane, caring for the crops, harvesting and then transporting the sweet grass to the mills. I am thankful for the mill workers too, who endure dusty, noisy, hot and dangerous working conditions, in order for us to enjoy the products from the cane juice.

Finally, I am thankful for being part of the rum industry during a time of growing awareness, craft resurgence and environmental responsibility.

"Premiumization" in rum should go beyond the perceived improvement in packaging: it should be rooted in corporate philosophy, production methods, environmental policies and consumer education. If you haven't already, please read pages 20-25 for an overview of the four winners in this year's Rum And The Environment Awards.

I wish all a very happy holiday season!

Margaret

TEAM INTERVIEW: CRIS DEHLAVI

by Margaret Ayala



Q: All our readers always look forward to your cocktail recipes and commentary. Which were some of your favorite recipes this year and why?

I think my favorite article was the one about garnishes. I have always believed that garnishes should be functional so writing about them was fun. I also really enjoyed writing about CORS (Central Ohio Rum Society), founded by my good friend Chad White. He started it as just a way to get rum nerds together and now he has a huge following and has been able to bring distillers and ambassadors from all over the world to Columbus.

Q: Compared to last year, do you think people are drinking more at home and going out to bars less?

I don't know that they are going out to bars LESS, but I do know that people are more interested in making good quality cocktails at home. I teach classes 6 times a year on basic beginning mixology skills and the attendees are all non-bartenders. I think people really appreciate being able to make drinks at home and are surprised at how easy it can be if they know some key techniques.

Q: Did you add new rums to the cocktail lineup at Miranova in 2018?

Yes, and one of them is in the December issue. It is my twist on a Hot Buttered Rum, served cold!



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Q: It seems bitters were making a comeback last year, some mixologists even developed their own recipes and dozens of new brands were launched. Are you still seeing an up-tick in their popularity and use?

Absolutely. Bitters are the "salt and pepper" in a drink, they round out all of the other ingredients and give you the ability to add flavors that can completely change the cocktail. For instance: Last night someone asked me to make a Manhattan, but not a traditional one. I added Cardamom bitters and it completely changed the drink and was honestly one of the best Manhattans I have ever had.

Q: Before Prohibition, it was common for cocktails to take many minutes to make, but in today's fast-paced society this is not always sustainable. How do you determine how much preparation time is justified to make a cocktail?



All drinks can be streamlined so that the execution time doesn't take too long. Batching cocktails, combining spirits in "cheater" bottles, and of course preparing garnishes/ice/etc... are all ways that bartenders can minimize steps. Perhaps this should be an article for next year!

Q: You made a trip to Scotland earlier this year. Can you tell us about your trip? What can you tell us about the bar scene there, do you think trends there are a sign of things to come here in the States?

Yes I was in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Edinburgh's cocktail scene is amazing!!! Truly some of the best bars in the world. All of the cocktail bars are in walking distance of each other, so you can easily bar hop. Their cocktails are innovative, and their ice and garnish game is incredible. I think you can find a lot of these same trends and techniques in bars here in the USA, the difference is that really every single bar in Edinburgh is world class. My favorites: Hoot The Redeemer, Nitecap, Panda & Sons, and Bramble.

Q: Do you have any special message you would like to share with your fans? Is there anything in particular that they can look forward to in 2019?

My only message is a giant **THANK YOU!** When I started writing for Got Rum? I was terrified! I know I can make a great cocktail and entertain you as you sit at my bar, but writing wasn't something I thought I could do. I genuinely enjoy doing it and am thrilled that people enjoy reading my articles. I think in 2019 I will incorporate some more techniques into my articles, things that people can do at home as well as behind their bars.

Cris



by Margaret Ayala



Q: Visiting distilleries and their tasting rooms is one of the best ways to learn about the people and the craft behind a brand. Which distilleries did you get to visit this year and which ones are on your radar for next year?

This was sort of an odd year for me as I only managed to visit one distillery in Saint Augustine, Florida. For 2019, I am hoping to visit at least one distillery in Boston as well as some locations in Kentucky and the Caribbean.

Q: Do you have any advice for tour guides or distillery personnel, so that guests (technical and non-technical) can get more out of their visits?

Have a tour guide trained up to expect technical questions, and if it is possible to have the guest speak to a staff member who has the expertise (and time) to answer the question.

I believe guests on a tour should manage their expectations by understanding the credentials of the person giving the tour and to not play stump the tour guide. Folks sharing the tour with you will appreciate your good behavior.

Q: Rum festivals are great ways for consumers to be introduced to new brands and to mingle with entertaining brand ambassadors. Which festivals are you planning to attend and which ones would you recommend to our readers?

Out of the gate the Miami Rum Congress (miamirumcongress.com) in February. The organizers have lined up a great group of speakers and brands for the event that I think any rum enthusiast would enjoy experiencing. As far as the rest of the year, I have several travel goals in mind and have nothing set in stone at this time.

As far as other festivals, the Chicago, New York, and San Francisco rum fests are getting reputations for being quality one day events. In addition, the New England Tequila and Rum festival continues to do well every year.

Q: What trends, if any, have you seen emerging in the rum world?

During 2018, we saw competition between some of the brands really heat up. This is leading to some interesting strategic releases that are displaying some creative partnerships and interesting rum blends.

In 2019, I expect to see harder pushes by some islands and their governments to establish Geographical Indications for their rums. The GI indicates products that have a specific geographical origin and must meet certain requirements and standards to be considered a product of that country. I am aware of certain brands resisting this, but it is my hope the islands get them established.

Q: Just a month or so ago you took a trip to Cuba. How was your rum experience there?

I feel we barely scratched the surface during our visit to Cuba and hope to return for a longer visit next year. We enjoyed our visit in Havana and our introduction to different Cuban rums. A longer visit, would allow for a deeper dive into not only the Cuban world of rum, but the art and culture as well. The architecture and art around the city was amazing.

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

As I mentioned, during 2018 we saw competition between the brands really start to heat up as well as the introduction of more rums with questionable origins and age statements.

When you see a new rum on the shelves if you do not recognize the brand, think before you buy. Do your homework about the brands and the details related to a release. If you suspect something is off, you are probably right and should ask questions. There are plenty of outlets via social media and brand experiences to make inquiries and learn more about the product. We the consumers do not have to know all the details and secrets related to a product; but it is fair to ask about the use of additives, the country of origin; and how an age statement is determined. As the true character of some of the producers is revealed. let your conscious be your guide, and use your money to support the brands and people you believe deserve it.

Paul

TEAM INTERVIEW: PHILIP ILI BARAKE

by Margaret Ayala

Q: It is amazing that we have celebrated now six years with your cigar & rum pairing! We can't thank you enough for everything you have shared with us and our readers! What advice do you have for someone who is just now getting into the world of cigars and rum? Is there a particular pairing that you did this year that you would recommend they start with?

Yes, I still can't believe how many years have passed, time spent together, learning about my pairings, it is a fabulous field that never ceases to amaze me, the complex and restrictive world of cigars and rum.

My recommendation for beginners is to believe in themselves, don't be intimidated by those who've been in the cigar world much longer. The great experience "castle" is built from day one, and even a beginner's experiences are valuable. After a while, looking back, they will be able to recognize all the lessons learned and they will be able to teach beginners as well.



Q: Of all the pairing you have done this year, is there one in particular that stands out from the rest? Why?

I think the pairing that brought me the best memories was "Rusty Hook," an interpretation of the Drambuie cocktail but made with rum. It made me rediscover this cocktail, which I had abandoned for a while due to improper or overly-sweet preparations. Believe it or not, many bars can't prepare it correctly despite its simplicity.

Q: You recently conducted a Rum University training course in Panama. What can you tell us about it and about the people you were able to instruct?

It was a dream come true: to be able to educate upcoming influencers in the rum world. We covered rum classifications, a difficult topic nowadays, since it is hard to discuss it without talking good or bad about specific rum brands. The idea was for students to make up their own minds, focused on each of the rums' potential in different markets. It worked out great, I made a lot of new friends in Panama and I expect to be back there in 2019, as well as in other interesting markets.

Q: Your bar in Chile (Red Frog Bar) is now on its second year. What have been some of the toughest obstacles and where do you want the bar to go next?

It was and continues to be one of the toughest challenges I've faced in my life, full of learning and with a lot of professional growth. Knowing deep inside that your commitment and that of your partners is strong and enjoying the happiness, not only from our clients, but knowing we are supporting the families of our employees, all this is a heavy burden to carry, but a great source of joy. We strive to continue, trying to be better each day.

Q: I feel that it is not common to see women smoking a cigar and sipping rum. Do you feel the same way and what can we do to reach this important segment of the population?

I don't mean this in a sexist way, but I really like to meet women who are knowledgeable and who enjoy smoking cigars; there is something sapiosexual about them that makes them unique. I hope to see more and more of them in the future.

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

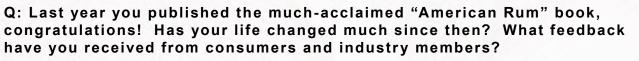
Hopefully soon I'll be able to share news of the opening of the new bar, the rums behind the bar and the pairings I'll be preparing for guests, in an un-rushed manner. The pairings for 2019 will be made from the new location, after the last guests leave, when all that remains to be done is opening a bottle of rum, pulling out a good cigar and creating good stories. If you are ever in Santiago, Chile, you must stop by the bar so we can enjoy a good cigar and rum pairing!

Philip



by Margaret Ayala





Thank you. Yes, there have been some changes in my life. Right now I am planning to devote more time and energy to a new search on rum and less to my business. I published the book one year ago and since then I have received a lot of interesting feedback from consumers and experts from Europe, Latin America and elsewhere. Unfortunately, not so much from the United States. This has been a surprise and, obviously, a bit of a disappointment to me.

Q: Do you have plans to publish more books? If so, what can we expect and when?

Yes, I do. This year I have published a series of articles on the Origin of Alcoholic Distillation in the West. The issue is fascinating, little studied and virtually unknown to the general public. The "invention" of alcoholic distillation involved alchemists, philosophers, Franciscan friars etc. and sheds new light on the origin of rum too. My son and co-author Claudio is doing more research on this issue and we want to publish a book about it, we hope before next summer.

Moreover, as our readers know, I have just started a new line of enquiry about the role of the French in the history of rum. It is an interesting, hot issue and it has already sparked off a lively debate with the participation of renowned experts. The research is in progress and I do not know where it will take us.

Q: Being an entrepreneur is not easy, let alone researching and writing while running La Casa del Rum. How do you manage to find time for all this? Do you have any advice for those who want to be like you?

For some years I have dedicated most of my time to my business concern in tourism and to La Casa del Rum and only part of my free time to studying. Now, as I have just told you, I have decided to do the opposite. I like studying and I want to give historical research all the time and care it deserves, even if it means withdrawing a bit from the day-to-day running of the business.

Q: Which cocktail is the most popular at La Casa del Rum? How about rums served neat? Also, what rums do you currently have in your portfolio?

A great classic like Daiquiri, but revisited using different kinds of good, white rums, among which also some Rhum Agricole. Many of our customers prefer to drink rum neat, like me, and for them we have a wide selection. Among the rums we have selected and bottled under our label, two are probably the most successful: a wonderful Overproof rum from Barbados that we selected some years ago and a new, unaged rum from Martinique. The latter is a blend of white, young rums, mostly made from pure juice, but also with a part made from molasses which maybe helps to make it much easier to drink for many consumers.

Q: You have been busy doing presentations at different rum festivals this year. Do you find the audiences have been very receptive or are there misconceptions that are hard to eradicate?

Usually the audiences are interested and receptive. Yes, there are some misconceptions, for instance about aging, but I have discovered that often it is a matter of simply not knowing the fundamentals of spirit making. Therefore I tend to start by explaining the very basics, the ABC: fermentation, distillation, aging, congeners etc.

Q: Last year you mentioned a possible trend involving the category of white rums. Do you feel there has been a big interest in white rums or have you seen a different trend emerge?

I think the facts have proved me right. The market is full of new white rums. Many important brands renowned for their aged rums have enriched their portfolio with white, young rums. Even some Latin American producers, from countries where the distillate cannot legally be called rum unless it is aged, have begun to release premium white rums. This means that the trend is strong.

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

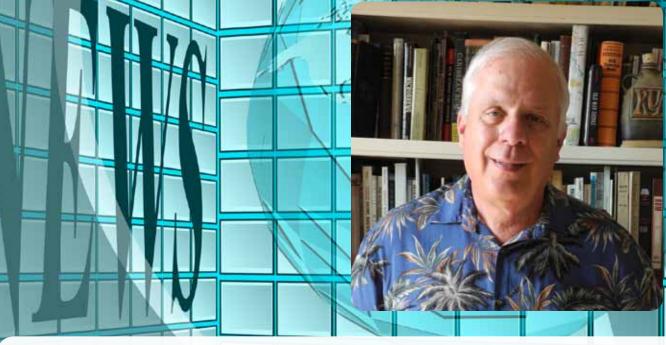
TALE Soul

If I may, I would like to invite the readers of GOT RUM? to follow my Blog: www.therumhistorian.com

Marco



by Margaret Ayala



Q: What are some of the most noteworthy rum stories (news) you reported to our readers during this year and what made them so relevant to you?

I think the big news this year came from the island of Barbados and the island of Jamaica.

On Barbados, Richard Seale, the purist behind the Foursquare Distillery, has spent over twenty years perfecting his art and the science of blending column and pot still rums. His real magic comes in the various barrels and aging techniques he uses to create his Exceptional Cask Series, including such legendary expressions as Triptych, Criterion and Dominus. I have lost track of how many Distiller/Distillery of the Year Awards he has won in 2018.

But on the other side of the island, new life is being injected into the West Indies Rum Distillery. Alexandre Gabriel, the man behind Cognac Ferrand and Plantation Rums bought the distillery in 2017. Previously, West Indies was producer of bulk rums for companies like Malibu. Before the purchase, Gabriel would buy interesting rums from around the world

and age them in cognac barrels in France. Now he can produce his own rums. Gabriel is determined to return the distillery to its previous heritage and has resurrected an old batch still to create the heavier rums that have not been made there in years.

Twelve-hundred miles away on the island of Jamaica, there are two legendary distilleries famous for their traditional Jamaican pot-still rums. In the same deal that he acquired West Indies, Gabriel also purchased one third of the Clarendon and Long Pond distilleries. After much work and a fire, both distilleries are up and running again. Gabriel used marks from both distilleries to create his newest rum, Xaymaca.

I think rum drinkers can expect amazing rums from these two masters and these three distilleries in the years to come.

Q: You are always on the quest to find new rum books. Are there any hard-tofind books you are struggling to get? Which has been your favorite this year and why?

There has been one book that I have

been after for several years. With help from a very nice lady in Paris, I was finally able to track down a copy of Les Plantations Saint James 250 Ans by Jean-Louis Donnadieu and Marc Sassier. This beautiful book was published in 2015 to celebrate the 250 Anniversary of Rhum Saint James. It is approximately 10 by 10 inches, has 256 pages and is beautifully illustrated with old photographs, paintings and labels. The book covers the history of rhum production on Martinique as well the history of Saint James. Marc Sassier is the Chief Oenologist at Saint James and writes with authority. To learn more about Marc Sassier and Saint James, see Margaret Ayala's interviews with him in the November 2017 and November 2018 issues of "Got Rum?".

2018 brought several rum books to the shelves. Rum - The Complete Guide, The Bartenders Guide to Rum, the Spirit of Rum and 101 Rums to Try Before You Die were basically lists of the author's favorite rums. Of these I like 101 Rums the best. Small, 4-1/2 x 6 inches, 225 pages, Ian Buxton's book has the most interesting selection of rums and concise writing that combines history, description and wit. I also liked Bryce Bauer's travelogue research in his book, The New Rum.

Q: Did you attend any rum festivals this year? If so, how did they compare to your experience at last year's California Rum Festival and do you plan to attend any rum festivals in 2019?

Did manage to make a marathon oneday trip to Chicago to attend the Chicago Rum Festival. I flew out of Denver at 6:00 AM on a rainy Saturday morning in April. Got to rainy Chicago, took the L to Rick Bayless's Mexican Brewpub, Cruz Blanca, for some pre-rum sustenance and made it to the Rum Festival by 1:00 PM. Squeezed in six hours of rum tasting and enjoyed lectures from Richard Seale, Bailer Pryor and Ian Burrell. Caught an Uber back to Midway Airport and managed to run through the airport and get the last seat on my Southwest flight back to Denver. My head hit the pillow back home just short of midnight. My bucket list includes one of the two festivals in Miami, RumFest in England and another visit to San Francisco.

Q: You are an accomplished brewer (even if you won't admit it) and I'm sure you've seen craft brewers barrel-aging their beer. What are your favorite rum barrel aged beers?

It has been a family tradition in my house to follow Thanksgiving dinner with a bottle of Avery Brewing Company's Rumpkin. This big pumpkin ale (16.3% ABV) is aged in rum barrels and is full of pumpkin/Fall spices. It is a great way to close out the day. This summer, Avery also released Plank'd, an Imperial Coconut Porter that is aged in rum barrels. At 16.2% ABV, this might be another way to close out a big meal. Founders Brewing is just now coming into Colorado and I am anxiously awaiting their Imperial IPA called Barrel Runner. Big and hoppy, this beer comes in at 'only' 11% ABV. I have been searching for a bottle of New Holland's 20th Anniversary American Ale. Released last November, the beer was brewed in celebration of twenty years of brewing at New Holland and comes in at a whopping 20% ABV and in 22 ounce bottles. Those clever New Holanders.

Q: Have you ever made a rum barrel aged beer?

Funny, you should ask. A local brewery in Denver opens up their professional equipment to amateurs for a quarterly competition. The beer that sells the best is then brewed in a full production batch. Recently I brewed a traditional Yorkshire Old Ale. The recipe calls for British Molasses and aging in rum barrels. Since I didn't happen to have any empty rum barrels lying around, I used rum barrels chips for flavor. A little extra rum helped both the chips and the brewer.

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

May your glass and your heart be filled with the spirits of the Holidays!

Mike

TEAM INTERVIEW: THE AYALAS

by Mike Kunetka

In 2016, for the Annual Team Interview for "Got Rum?" Magazine, Margaret and Luis Ayala asked me if I had any rum-related trips on my bucket list. I mentioned that I wanted to go to Texas, tour their Rum Central blending facility and turn the tables and interview them. Fast forward two years and I am on a mission, a three-day trip focused on rum and barbeque. Thursday is the obligatory day spent eating and hanging out with my relatives. On Friday, I wait in line for three and a half hours at Franklin Barbeque to try his famous brisket. Yes, it's that good! Saturday is rum day. It's been a busy production week for the Ayalas, but they are gracious enough to take me to Rum Central on their day off, give me a tour and submit themselves to my endless questions.



As we head North-East from Austin, the countryside consists of rolling hills, Oak and Mesquite trees and cactus. We pull up to a large metal building that has a small sign that reads "RUM CENTRAL, By Appointment Only". We get out of the car and Luis guides me over to the well pump house. In order to get water for blending and daily use, they have to pump it from deep beneath the Texas limestone. As he points out all the equipment, he casually says "keep an eye out for rattlesnakes". What? Mesquite trees, cactus and rattlesnakes are not usually things you would associate with rum, but I push on.

Margaret opens the door to the main building, the first whiffs of rum come out the door and I tell myself this is going to be good. The first thing you see is a conference table with eight comfortable leather chairs. There is a small still on the back shelf, with large barrels on either side. Then I see the bottles. On the right side there are three shelves that wrap around two walls and hold 1,200 bottles of rum. Just about every brand I can recall is there, as well as labels that have long come and gone. Everything from Ron Jeremey to a special anniversary release from Appleton that was only sold at the distillery. These are the reference marks. On the left side are more shelves, but these hold about 150 small identical bottles that bear simple white labels. These are samples of some of the rums they stock and use to create custom blends.

As we move into the laboratory, we pass a group of tables with several blends in process and another table with laboratory instruments. We then come to a large steel door with a sign that reads: Danger – Flammable. Before opening the door, Luis turns to me.

Luis: So, we always have this light off and we smell and test levels before we turn lights on just because if there are leaks and there are vapors, those vapors may be explosive, so always before we come through here into the Rum Room, we take a moment to smell to make sure it is safe. Imagine that overnight, a barrel starts leaking...

He opens the door and the aroma is, well, intoxicating. It's that wonderful smell that



any visitor enjoys when they first walk into the aging warehouse at a distillery. Margaret wakes me out of my daze and nudges me farther into the warehouse. To my right is an impressive Reverse Osmosis System to filter the well water from outside and a 1,500 gallon storage tank for holding the processed water. There are several pumps on the floor and hoses everywhere. In the middle is a large blending tank where the different marks will be combined. I ask about the scale at the bottom of the tank and Luis explains.

Luis: Alcohol's volume is affected by the ambient temperature, it easily contracts on cold days and it expands on hot days. For this reason we cannot use flow meters or volumetric gauges, instead we calculate rum by weight and proof. The load cells/scales allow us to take volume out of the equation, resulting in more accurate processing.

In the center of the room is the first of several tall shelving units, the kind you would find at any big-box retail warehouse, filled with three rows of commercial totes, each holding 1,000 liters (275 gallons) of rum. To my left are two racks of barrels.

Luis: These barrels here are ex-rye, rye whiskey barrels from Heaven Hills. We are finishing some of our rum in Rye whiskey barrels for a special formulation. These other barrels are ex-Bourbon, some of them also from Heaven Hill. The same rum you can finish in rye barrels will have a different flavor than when it is finished in bourbon barrels. When you combine them in different proportions, you get different profiles.

I am stunned by the variety of rums and want to grab a glass and start opening taps, but Margaret, being the pragmatist that she is, guides me back to the conference room to start the interview. She does have a glass of rum waiting for me.

I remember that around 2000, I became interested in rum and was desperate to find books on the subject. There were several versions of Ed Hamilton's *Complete Guide to Rum* and *Rum* – *Yesterday and Today*, by Barty-King and Massel and that was it. Then I read that some folks in Texas, Rum Runner Press, were writing a new book entitled *The Rum Experience*. I must have bugged the Ayalas twice a month for the next year, wondering when the book was going to be done. And I bugged them again when the second book, *The Encyclopedia of Rum Drinks*, was being written.

Mike: So, how did Rum Runner Press start?

Margaret: Many years ago, Luis and I started travelling through the Caribbean and Central America, visiting as many rum distilleries as we could. We also made a point to talk to the technical people and to the owners whenever possible. Luis was raised in a wine and brandy-producing area of Mexico, and he was already familiar with the technical aspects of alcohol production. We were pleasantly surprised by the openness and warmth we received and decided to share our experiences with the world, in the form of a book. At first we didn't know how/who would publish it, but that didn't stop us from writing. Years later, we were given a contract by a large academic publisher, but that ended up not working well and, instead of letting the project die, we decided to self-publish. But instead of using an existing printing house, we decided to learn how to print, bind and publish ourselves! That was the birth of Rum Runner Press, but now we do much more than printing and publishing.

Mike: Today Rum Runner Press, the parent company, includes "Got Rum?" Magazine, Rum Consulting, Rum University and Rum Central. How did that happen?

Margaret: After we published our first book, we started getting requests to help distilleries with different aspects of their productions. Early successes led to more and longer-term engagements and word of mouth took care of the rest. We quickly realized that the rum industry was in desperate need for formalized training, but doing so one-on-one was not efficient, this was the birth of The Rum University, which now offers courses in many countries and in association with many existing institutions.

Luis: Training people about the rum industry then led to new brand owners wanting to launch their own private labels, so we started getting requests for bulk rums and for blending services. At first we worked in-situ with selected distilleries, trying to blend rums for our clients, straight out of their facilities. But existing distilleries sometimes

cannot or do not want to deviate from specific fermentation and distillation styles, so this approach always had limitations. We decided that we needed to have our own Distilled Spirits Plant, where we could store rum from many different distilleries, giving us the flexibility to blend them at will, without compromising our clients' or suppliers' intellectual property. This was the birth of Rum Central, where we now have rum from over a dozen different countries.



Mike: Let's talk about the Magazine. I have copies going back to January of 2002. When did it start and what was the goal of the magazine?

Margaret: The first issue of "Got Rum?" -which was initially a newsletter- appeared in May of 2001. The format was very simple and straightforward, we didn't know if we were going to have an audience and, if so, would it be trade people or consumers. The magazine now has a better format and a clearer target, all thanks to years of attention to what our readers want. The magazine does not need the income from advertisers in order to survive, which gives us the power of objectivity lacked by other publications in the industry. Through the years we've also been fortunate to attract and retain the help of contributing writers such as you, who help us deliver the quality content we desire. Luis and I own the company, but the magazine would not be possible without our excellent team, which really means that the team owns it.



Mike: One of your most popular Rum University courses is a 5-day, hands-on course. What does it cover?

Luis: As rum consultants, we have been fortunate enough to be fully-booked for many years. While this is great for us, there were always potential clients we could not get to, due to time limitations. We looked closely at the challenge and decided we needed a way for us to share knowledge with many people at the same time, while still allowing the individuals to ask clarifying questions (which you can't do through printed material). The obvious answer was to host training, where we could present comprehensive information and tie it to practical exercises that could be the foundation for successful rum businesses. We offer all of this information to clients, on-site, at their distilleries, but our 5-Day Rum Course, which we offer through the Moonshine University in Kentucky, allows us to simultaneously interact with a larger group. The course has been well-received

and next year we'll be offering it for the 5th straight year. Many of our graduates are now running their own craft distilleries. Here is a brief overview of what we cover during the course:

- Day 1 The Business of Rum
- Day 2 The Classifications of Rum
- Day 3 The Art of Rum Making
- Day 4 History and Science of the Barrel
- Day 5 Essential Rum Laboratory, Introduction to Rum Blending



Mike: What were some of the first consulting jobs and what do you offer today?

Margaret: Some of our earlier consulting contracts were with large, multi-national distilleries, assessing organoleptic aspects of their inventories, working with their production personnel to maintain existing brands or to develop new ones. In some cases we were brought in to troubleshoot quality problems and sometimes just to brainstorm about brand strategies.

Luis: Today we do much more. For example, we spend quite a bit of time reviewing business plans for potential new distilleries, then moving into implementation and expansion for some of them, then M&A (Merger and Acquisition) for a few others.

Mike: Do you ever talk someone out of opening their own distillery?

Luis: Yes, quite often! Some people want to "retire" and think it would be fun to open and operate a distillery in their spare time. Others are not prepared to tolerate the financial risk of doing so, when all they plan to sell is a few cases of bottles each week, to tourists who stop by their shops. For some clients, we start by developing private labels for them and, once they've proved that they can sell the rum, we then design the craft distilleries they need in order to ferment, distill and age the product themselves, without impacting the profile as they migrate from buying our rum to making it.

Mike: So you offer help developing private labels, what other services do you offer through Rum Central?

Margaret: Our standard rum marks are all available "as-is". All you need is the proper permits and you can come select the marks you want and we'll ship them to you right away. We can also custom blend marks or finish them (in Bourbon, Cognac, Rye, Tequila or Wine barrels). Existing distilleries also send us samples of their rums and we create custom blends to help them achieve different styles.

Mike: Why would someone come to you as opposed to dealing directly with a distillery?

Margaret: When you go to a distillery, let's say in Jamaica, all they are going to be able to offer are the "marks" they make. If you want a blend that includes rums they don't make, then you are out of luck. So, if you want a blend of Jamaican rum and Brazilian Cachaça, for example, you won't be able to buy it from a supplier in either one of those countries. You'd have to order separate containers from them and blend them at your own facility or at a third party's. Because of the freight costs involved, you'd have to order full containers of each, otherwise you have to divide all the transportation costs by a small number of liters/gallons, driving your costs up unnecessarily. This approach simply does not work when you are trying to develop a proof of concept.

Luis: Chefs are only as good as what is in the pantry and how familiar they are with those "ingredients" (a.k.a. rum inventory). At Rum Central we are trying to have a

pantry fully-stocked with rums of different congener levels, from different geographical origins, aged and finished in a multitude of casks, so that we can blend them in different proportions, catering to what our clients want. Because we already have the inventories, our clients can have us do that blending and can order from us in small enough quantities that they can prove the viability of a commercial venture without risking a lot of capital.

Margaret: Another reason why it is a bad idea to deal directly with a single distillery is that they may suddenly decide to stop selling you or may inform you that the price will go up considerably. If your brand relies 100% on that distillery, then you find yourself in a bad situation. Rum Central offers a couple of different solutions: a) by having inventory already, the clients get a "buffer" that is not immediately affected by supply-side problems and b) by offering regional or multi-distillery blends, the clients have less risk and more growth potential. But we also offer a few single-distillery rums.

Mike: Let's talk about developing a custom blend. Say I want you to create the perfect rum for a Mai Tai, Mike's Miraculous Mai Tai Mixer. Where would we start?

Luis: It's happened before and our answer is that we are neither mixologists nor bartenders. You tell us which rum or rums combined made the best Mai Tai for you. If we have equivalent rums here, we will combine them in the proportions you told us. Or you can send us a sample with the proportions that you like, already mixed. We then analyze the sample and see what rums we have that are similar, This we can do, and we have done it many times. The clearer-defined target, the less consulting hours you are going to pay for. We charge a blending fee. If you change your mind half way through the process, and now you want a rum to make a Scorpion, or a Mojito or a Daiquiri, we don't mind changing directions but every hour spent is charged to your project. The betterdefined the goal is, the fewer discussions we are going to have whether we've arrived at the goal or not. If we have a target that has a definite color, a congener and tannic level, and sweetness level, those are measurable and quantifiable through instrumentation, so we know when we are there. Then if the sensory dimension matches, then you can't say that we have missed the target.

Margaret: We've had people who came in and had no idea about the rum industry. They just know

they want a product. Where do you start with that? We normally start with styles. We will start with the light end, which includes Cuban, Central American Style, then we go into Guyanese, Jamaican, and then we get into the French Agricoles, just to get an idea of what their pallet is leaning towards. This helps us realize, for example, that this person likes light congener rums, so we then eliminate everything else. Sometimes they think they are open to all options and we have to help them narrow that down.

Mike: But you are narrowing it down to a style. In theory you could blend something from two or more styles and make something that appeals to them.

Margaret: Correct. In some cases, the clients say I like the complexity of this one, but I like the fruitiness of that one. Those are notions that we can actually use. In our minds



we are thinking okay so they do like a little bit of congeners, where they thought they didn't. I kinda like this taste over here, but I don't like the smell. Those are clues for us to start narrowing the choices. Then we start giving them some guidance without influence. We do not want to influence their decisions, but hearing the words they are trying to communicate with, over the years we have started to understand.

Mike: Okay, let's try another approach. Let's say that I want to develop a full-bodied rum that would appeal to my friends who are whiskey lovers. Where would we start?

Luis: Not all whiskey lovers agree on which whiskey is the best, so we would have to start by asking which particular products they hold in high regard. Then we analyze those products organoleptically and quantitatively to determine things such as: type of barrel, congener types and levels, additives -if any-, etc. Once we have an idea of which of those traits can be replicated in a rum, we develop a round of prototypes and see if we can validate our assumptions. This process is iterative and usually gets us to the target in 2-5 rounds. The biggest challenge we have is vocabulary: even though we may speak the same language as our clients, we have no control over what the specific words mean to each individual. For some people "dry" means tannic, for others it mean bitter, for others it may be peppery. Over the years we have developed our own method for transcending this limitation and now we have tools that help us do exactly that.

Mike: When you are creating a blend, do you have to let it sit for a while? Can you work on more than one blend at a time?

Luis: Yes, you usually have to let them sit. Through the years we've learned which marks require more resting time than others. High-esters rums, for example, have a propensity to dissociate and cross-esterify, which requires time. Not letting the blends rest (not knowing they have to) may result in unstable/inaccurate products being sent to clients.

Margaret: Oh, yes, we HAVE to work on multiple blends at the same time. As you saw in the lab, we have three formulation stations, each one fully-equipped, and each station capable of handling up to 6 different formulations at the same time. Having good ventilation and good power of concentration are essential to keep things from getting out of control.

Mike: When you have a target in mind, do you two always agree on the blend you just made?

Margaret: Luis is better at defining the base or foundation for the rums we are formulating, especially if we are developing against a target sent to us by a client. He "sees" the congener compositions very clearly. Once he is done with the base, I normally fine tune it a bit and only then will both of us be happy with it. For the most part we agree blends are ready about 99% of the time.

Luis: Yes, for me flavors and aromas have shapes, textures and colors. I know this sounds weird, but that is how I process the information internally. Comparing the aroma of two samples then becomes a visual comparison of these elements.

Mike: Luis, how do you "see" a rum? Do the shapes change as you combine marks in a blend? Can you accurately remember the "shape" of blend from years ago?

Luis: The condition is called *synesthesia* and those of us who have it are called synesthetes. For most of my life I thought everyone perceived the world the same way I do, it was not until I started asking people about what colors they associate with numbers and about the shapes of the smells they perceive that I realized I was getting different experiences than the average person. But life is about doing the most with what you have, so I've turned it into an advantage, working as a blender. Some of our clients have

asked us for help identifying odd smells that appear in some of their distillates. Those challenges are always fun because I get to memorize the shapes I'm interested in, and then I spend hours, sometimes days, smelling around sugar mills and distilleries, looking for the sources.

Mike: Many people talk about the "premiumization" of rum and how it has already arrived or is about to. What are your thoughts on this subject?

Luis: What most people don't realize is that "premium," as defined by the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, is a price-based categorization, not a quality-based one. Obviously, you'd expect quality to go up as the retail price of a product does, but expensive glass bottles, fancy labels and pricey marketing campaigns can all contribute to the increased final price of a rum, without that price hike representing a proportional increase in the quality of the rum inside the bottle. Are we seeing price-based premiumization? Yes. Are we seeing quality-based premiumization? At a very small-scale, as a subset of the "craft" segment, the answer is also yes.

Margaret: Consumer education will be the catalyst of change. So far, the majority of consumers are not interested in nor are they able to recognize/appreciate anything other than very light rum, but things are slowly changing. The Rum University and our own offerings through Rum Central are starting to have an impact, as we are educating the brand owners and also offering the rum marks that allow for Bourbon, Brandy and Tequila drinkers to make an enjoyable transition into the rum world.

Mike: One last question. As you know I am a big collector of books on rum. You, too, have an amazing library at Rum Central. What aspect of rum do you think has not been properly covered in a book yet? What would be the perfect rum book for you?

Luis: I think a rum book written by someone who actually ferments, distills and ages rum for a living would be great. Unfortunately

such publications -when available- tend to cover only the style/brand of the employer, and tend to disparage rums from their competitors. I also imagine that employers would not want sensitive data to be published, but that really is what would make the book interesting, for example, how do they control bacterial infections during fermentation? Such books, however, have a very limited audience, so it is hard for traditional printing companies to be interested in publishing them.

Mike: Thank you Luis and Margaret for the interview, I hope this will be Part I of many! Luis and Margaret: You are welcome Mike! We are looking forward to it!



We Are The Framework For Your Success Rum Luis Ayala www.RumUniversity.com

CIGAR & RUM PAIRING by Philip III Barake



My name is Philip IIi 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).



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time at Duty Free in Puerto Rico, in an antique presentation, which I prefer much better than the current presentation, but we are told that the rum inside both is supposed to be the same. The original bottle was consumed at a tasting of the "Toby and Lulu" club, which is a club of cigar smokers that I run as a brotherhood and which we will be re-activating upon launching my rum bar.

I selected a Champagne Noir cigar from Perdomo Reserve, a Nicaraguan tobacco through and through, but not as aggressive as it appearance suggests. It is rolled very well and has perfect head and foot. The cigar did not draw very well during the first third, but this due to the format (Toro, 6 x 50). It was also smoother than I expected, given the Nicaraguan tobaccos.

The cocktail is made according to the classic recipe, caramelizing the brown sugar that was previously mixed with Angostura Bitters. I then added 2 ½ oz of Ron Bacardi Gran Reserva Limitada. The first few sips of the cocktail had strong herbal and fresh notes, which turned into leather and toasted hay (quite literally, similar to when you burn dry grass).

As I smoke my way into the second third, the sweetness from the cocktail becomes more apparent, giving the rum a smoother and longer finish.

Depending on the amount of sugar we add to the recipe, the finish can be even smoother, highlighting the notes of caramel or panela, while the herbal notes become more those of chamomile, which was perfect to accompany the increasing intensity of the tobacco.

As a personal choice, not necessarily as part of the pairing, I incorporated a cup of espresso and a touch of Ron Colibrí from Panama, which is a basic artisanal rum bottled at high proof, which makes it the ideal way to end a pairing like this one.

I hope this end of year brings everyone a lot of pairings and pairing opportunities that turn out fantastic. I also hope that all my readers will find inspiration in next year's pairings so they can create unforgettable memories of their own. I wish all much success, and hopefully the accomplishments will also be accompanied by rum, which would make them even better!

Regards, Philip IIi Barake #GR CigarPairing



