

Got Rum?™

APRIL 2013

FROM THE GRASS TO YOUR GLASS!



**RUM EVENTS - ANGEL'S SHARE
- RUM HISTORY - EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW -
RUM LIBRARY - TOBACCO & RUM**

THE ANGEL'S SHARE




Risik and Sweeney Pair



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PUNCH
DAVID WOOD

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MADRID, SPAIN June 4-7, 2013

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A CLOSER LOOK



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Got Rum?

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ON THE COVER: "Rum: writing your own story"

FROM THE EDITOR

Congenial Congeners

Now more than ever, the rum industry seems to be facing an identity crisis: many rum producers are under the assumption that neutral alcohol, distilled from molasses, is rum. Even though the US Federal government (through the TTB) stipulates that rum must not be distilled above 95%, much of the alcohol used to produce the leading brands is distilled to 96%, resulting in an alcohol base that is too neutral to be legally recognized as “rum”.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, we find micro distillers who believe that rum can be distilled at strengths below 60% ABV, feeling that the higher the congener content, the better the rum will be.

So what congener level is the perfect one for rum? This is one of the most common questions asked by our consulting clients. The answer, not surprisingly, is “it depends”.

In the first case, distilling a semi-neutral to neutral alcohol, when aging is the goal, results in aged sugarcane vodka, which is not all that appealing.

In the second case, distilling a heavy, cachaça-like product when the goal is a sipping rum, results in an equally unpleasant experience.

To further complicate things, un-skilled fermentation and distillation professionals do not discriminate between “good” and “bad” congeners. Components such as aromatic esters are seen by some people with the same disdain as higher alcohols. Even higher alcohols are often labeled as an entity, with little regard to the individual alcohols that comprise them and the delicate volume and proportion in which they should be present.

So why do rum producers struggle to understand congeners? It is my view that it is not so much a matter of understanding congeners, but of controlling their formation during fermentation: when a fermentation



is laden with undesirable congeners, the easiest way to remove them is to distill to such a high proof that –hopefully– their presence in the distillate is minimized. There are also distilleries using yeasts for rum that are best suited for industrial ethanol production, rather than yeasts that will produce more desirable congeners, but will reduce the overall ethanol yield.

Fortunately for purists out there, some rum companies still know and value their congeners. I wholeheartedly hope their styles and knowledge are preserved for many more generations.

Cheers!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luis'.

Luis Ayala, *Editor and Publisher*



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

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

THE ANGEL'S SHARE

by Paul Senft



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

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



Kirk and Sweeney Rum



www.35maplestreet.com

Kirk and Sweeney is a 12 year old rum from the Dominican Republic. The bottle is a 750 ml with a 40% ABV. Aged in American white oak this rum is produced by 35 Maple Street, the Spirits division of The Other Guy (TOG), a wine company whose home base is in Sonoma California.

35 Maple Street also produces a Botanical Gin and a Rye Whiskey.

The rum is named for a Schooner known for running rum during Prohibition. It was captured by the Coast Guard in 1924 with a large supply of rum on board.

The Coast Guard converted the ship to a training vessel and renamed her the Chase. It remained in service until its retirement in the late 1940's.

Appearance/Presentation

The bottle is inspired by the classic onion bulb design. The rum is secured in the bottle by a raised cork that is covered with a bronze safety seal. The neck of the bottle has a picture of the Kirk and Sweeney on it and details the batch and bottle number.

The bottle for this review is from Batch number 1, Bottle number 5473. On the side of the natural cork you will find a little inscription about the ship.

The cork for our bottle was already starting to feel dried out and will need to be monitored in case it needs to be replaced. Around the bottle is a classic navigational map design that hints at the possible route the Kirk and Sweeney might have taken during Prohibition.

The rum maintains a pleasant mahogany color from the bottle to the glass. As I swirl the rum, I watch thick beads form on the glass and slowly descend down the sides.

THE ANGEL'S SHARE

Nose

I found the aroma pleasant but not complex. The aroma revealed smoky vanilla, soft fruit notes and a light hint of oak at the end.

Palate

The first sip reveals the smoky presence of oak tannins, followed by the honey hitting the high notes while the smoky oak carries the foundation. Out of this, vanilla and caramel notes form and unite creating a well balanced toffee effect.

The toffee forms into a subtle cocoa note that carries into the light dry finish of the rum.

Review

There are times when the aroma of the rum tells you all about what you are about to experience. Kirk and Sweeney is not one of those rums. The smoky vanilla in the aroma cloaks a complexity that only comes out in the flavor of the rum.

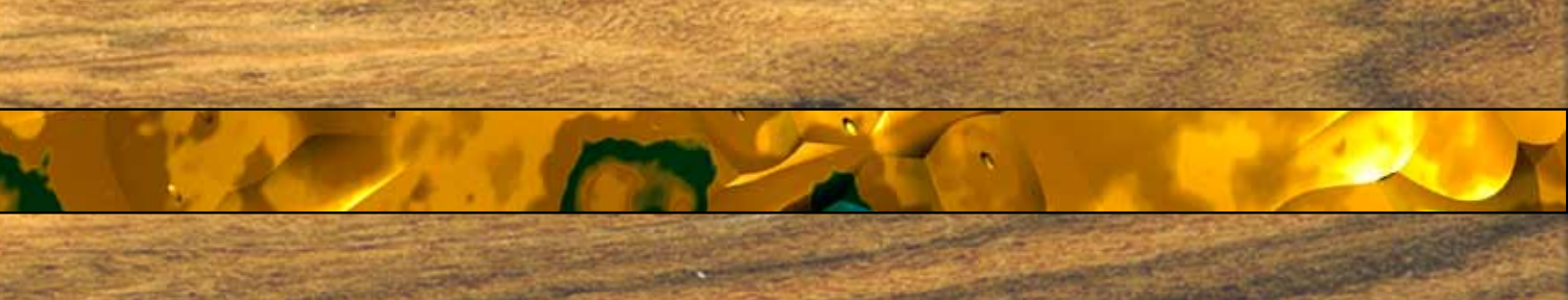
These flavors combine to create a full bodied experience that a well balanced aged rum can provide. It provides some of the flavor profiles I have found in some of my favorite rums from the Dominican Republic.

Try it neat or with an ice cube; I believe you will discover it to be a nice sipping rum with a good price point, compared to similar products in the market place.

Owney's Original Rum



www.owneys.com



Looking back in time, rum has a strong presence in the history of the North East United States. New York and New England both produced rums in the 1600's that contributed to the rising oppression of the British Empire. In 1733 the Crown passed the Molasses Act, trying to force the colonies to use molasses from the West Indies. The West Indies could not meet the distillers demand, so they found creative ways to get around the act by using smugglers.

This frustrated the British and led them to pass the Sugar Act in 1764. This act cracked down on smugglers and taxed the colonies on any goods they imported or exported. This crushed the Rum Distilleries' ability to make a profit and forced them to close or change focus to other spirits such as beer and whiskey.

In 2011 a distillery quietly opened in Brooklyn, New York called The Noble Experiment. The owner, Bridget Firtle, made her dream of producing a New York Rum a reality in 2012.

The first product of that dream is Owney's Original New York City Rum. Named after Owen "Owney, the Killer" Madden: a Hell's Kitchen gangster who ascended to power during Prohibition as a bootlegger, rum runner, and speakeasy operator. This rum celebrates his legacy, as well as, the storied history of New York distilled spirits.

Appearance/Presentation

On the shelf this bottle distinguishes itself from everything else. It is shaped like a prohibition era medicine bottle with TNE NYC EST 2012 raised on the glass. The label wraps the 750 ml bottle with details about the spirit on the front and the story of Owney on the back. An added nice touch to this bottle is the way the label purposely covers the sides of the bottle in order to showcase the batch and case numbers.

Our bottle came from Batch #3, Case #2. The bottle is sealed with a plastic cork and secured with a security strip across the top.

The liquid is clear in the bottle and glass. Swirling the rum reveals a high level of filtration as there is no sign of distillate. The legs quickly run down the sides of the glass leaving a solid ring of crystal beads.

Nose

The aroma begins with a solid floral note that dissipates, revealing light vanilla and cane accents with a hit of alcohol.

Palate

As the rum rolls across my tongue it unveils a pleasantly strong molasses note. As it fades, the vanilla note carries as the alcohol bites at the end and they linger together in the finish.

Review

It is a bold and brave thing for someone to leave a career in finance and focus on making their dreams a reality. I am pleased with the first expression from The Noble Experiment distillery and I look forward to experiencing future releases. Bridget Firtle in her interviews has revealed that this is step one for her rums. She has plans to produce aged and infused rums as she increases her inventory.

She has skillfully avoided some traps that other small batch distillers fall into and has produced a well balanced product. If you enjoy the flavor and mouth feel of an immature 80 proof rum, then you will be quite happy sipping this one neat or with a cube of ice. However, I would be inclined to use it as an ingredient for classic cocktails and, at around 36 dollars a bottle, it is worth experimenting with.



SATISFACTION GUARANTEED.





Ron de Jeremy
THE adult RUM

RESERVA | International Rum Conference and Tasting Competition, Madrid 2012: Gold Medal | SIP Awards 2012: Gold Medal
UK Rumfest-Golden Rum Barrel Awards 2011: Nominated for Best New Golden Rum | SPICED | SIP Awards 2012: Platinum

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A CLOSER LOOK



Mr. Javier Herrera, Director,
International Rum Conference

Q: How does Spain compare to the rest of the rum world?

A: Let's not forget that the world's oldest "trapiche" (sugar mill) is in Granada, dating back to the Arab occupation of Spain. Since then, the country has been a rum paradise, all our countrymen who had to seek a better future outside of Spain contributed to the success of today's rums. This includes Spaniards such as Facundo Bacardi, Juan Serralles, Andrés Brugal, Julián Barceló, J. Armando Bermúdez, Camp and Alvarez families and José Arechabala (just to name a few).

Everyone listed above was a legend in his own right. Rum was not only a distilled beverage to them, but it also represented life itself, for their families, their towns, cities, even their countries and symbolized wealth and prosperity. So magnificent was this distillate that it was even used to heal, cook, celebrate, mourn, pray, etc...

In the past, many families in the Canary Islands, in the south of Spain, depended on sugarcane for a living. Today the only place harvesting the cane is in Isla de la Palma, where my friends from Ron Aldea continue distilling their Aguardiente from locally harvested cane. Curiously enough, it is Cuban immigrants on the island who are in charge of the zafra (harvest). I believe that the current economic crisis in Spain could be used as an opportunity for people to return to their roots, planting sugarcane on the other Canary Islands.

Q: How did you fall in love with rum?

A: Well, I have my degree in Hospitality and Tourism which is where I learned a lot about our history with rum. I have relatives that live in Motril and Málaga, which are both regions know for their rums. In addition, I have close ties with the Canary Islands, specifically in La Palma, where they too have good rums. As you can see, my life has been surrounded by rum. For these reasons, I've set out to learn as much as possible. There is very little literature available about rum so knowing different languages has helped me further my research. I am a member of the Spanish Sommelier's Association and President of the International Rum Club. Rum has allowed for my passion and professional interests to come together.

Q: How did you come up with the idea for the Festival?

A: As I mentioned earlier, the rum world offers very little literature on the subject, so as I set out to learn more about rum, I made the decision to start the Festival and Conferences. I was convinced that these activities would go a long way in helping to educate consumers of just how wonderful the rum they enjoy really is.

Q: Will rum outsell vodka in the USA, as well as, in other parts of Europe just like whiskey?

A: I am convinced of it, since rum is a far more versatile beverage with an almost unlimited array of flavor combinations. Also, women typically are the game changers in this industry, and they have a sweeter palate than men. Since rum is usually sweet, if the rum industry really goes after them, we'll see a notable success by 2016, marking the first step towards the "premiumization" of rum.



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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW



We are happy to bring you this interview with Mr. Robert M. "Bob" Gunter, President & CEO of Kōloa Rum Company, located in Kalaheo Kaua'i, Hawai'i, USA.

Kōloa's success in Hawai'i shows us that the American craft-distilling trend is not limited to the contiguous states, and that the spirit of entrepreneurship is alive and well in all corners of the rum world.

We wish Bob and his team success beyond their wildest dreams!

-Margaret Ayala, Publisher

Q: Can you give us a little bit of history about your distillery?

Kōloa Rum Company (KRC) was formed by a small group of Kaua'i-based investors with the concept to produce world-class rum from locally sourced ingredients and, in doing so, support Hawaii's beleaguered sugar industry, stimulate our local economy and provide meaningful employment opportunities for Kaua'i residents.

In 2007, KRC purchased Hawaiian Fruit Specialties, producer of the iconic Hawaiian Kukui brand of jams, jellies and syrups, and immediately began construction of our Distillery in Kalaheo, and Tasting Room and Company Store at Kilohana Plantation in Lihue. Rum production and bottling operations commenced in September 2009 and the Tasting Room and Company Store opened immediately thereafter.

Today, with three combined operations (Distillery, Tasting Room & Company Store and Hawaiian Kukui) KRC employs 21 Kaua'i residents and has sales and distribution across nine states, the District of Columbia and Western Canada.

Q: How did you get started in the rum industry?

After moving to Kaua'i many years ago, I was first employed with Lihue Plantation Company which, at that time, was one of the largest sugar plantations in Hawaii. Working in the sugar industry was an incredible experience for me, both professionally and personally, and one that left an indelible impact. Not only did I learn much about cultivating, harvesting and processing sugarcane, I also gained great respect and admiration for those who work in the industry and the special culture that binds them together.

In early 2003, I was invited to assist in establishing a small rum distillery on Maui. Upon completion, our next project led to the building and commissioning of a second distillery on Maui designed to produce vodka from pineapple juice. These two distillery projects provided me with a unique opportunity to work hand-in-hand with seasoned industry professionals, including Steve Thompson, former President of Brown Forman Distilling, and Bob Young, highly regarded for his vast knowledge and experience in production, formulation and bottling operations. Through them, I was able to interact and learn first-hand from several of the most successful distilled spirits companies and contract packagers in the country. This 'apprenticeship' greatly accelerated my learning curve and provided me with the opportunity to meet and form lasting relationships with a number of key industry professionals, many of whom I continue to consult with on a regular basis.



Q: What products do you currently produce?

- **Kaua`i White** (80 proof, 750ml and 50ml): Dry and crisp with hints of oak, licorice and toasted sugars. Clean and inviting, with a fruity pineapple finish.
- **Kaua`i Gold** (80 proof, 750ml and 50ml): Vivid golden oak in appearance, with hints of molasses, candied apple and vanilla on the nose. Slightly sweet, with a burnt sugar and candied lemon finish.
- **Kaua`i Dark** (80 proof, 750ml and 50ml): Rich coffee and molasses hues in the glass, with coffee and brown sugar on the nose. Notes of vanilla, cotton candy, roasted nuts, caramel apple and burnt orange peel. A long finish, with plenty of wood and toast.
- **Kaua`i Spice Rum** (88 proof, 750ml and 50ml): Produced from a proprietary spice blend, golden wheat in color, with hints of spice cake on the nose. Extremely well-balanced with a hint of caramel and vanilla and a long, smooth finish.
- **Kōloa RTD Mai Tai Cocktail** (34 proof, sold in 200ml, 1.0L and 1.75L).
- **Kōloa RTD Rum Punch** (20 proof, 1.0L).
- **Additional Products:** Kōloa Rum Cake, Kōloa Chocolate Rum Fudge Sauce, Hawaiian Kukui brand Jams, Jellies and Syrups, and a large inventory of logo ware and unique locally made items, all of which are available at our Company Store at Kilohana Plantation.

Q: Is there something unique about your distillery and/or your products?

There are three unique aspects to our production processes. 1) We use Hawaiian cane sugar exclusively in formulating and producing all of our products, 2) Kaua`i is home to Mt. Wai`ale`ale, recognized as one of the wettest spots on earth. Our abundant supply of pristine rainwater provides great taste and mouth-feel, 3) our vintage, 1210 gallon copper pot still and copper column with 7 plates. Originally built in 1947 for Brown Forman Distillery in Kentucky, this hybrid pot still renders distillate that is exceptionally smooth, clean and polished.

Q: Do you have any plans for developing additional rums in the near future?

We recently received formula approval for our new 80 proof, all-natural Kaua`i Coconut Rum which we are planning to launch soon, just in time for summer. The quality, taste and aroma characteristics of this new product are exceptional and we are anxious to add it to our expanding portfolio. Beyond this, we have several exciting new products and line extensions under development, the first of which we hope to introduce later this year.

Q: What have been some of the greatest challenges/obstacles you have encountered thus far?

Our biggest obstacles have been in finding our niche in an ultra-competitive market dominated by large multinational beverage producers, and overcoming the high cost of doing business in Hawaii. Kōloa Rum's success to-date is directly attributable to the experience, expertise and dedication of our employees, quality of our products and growing consumer demand for locally-made products.

continued on page 16

continued from page 15

Manufacturing consumable products on remote islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean is expensive and very challenging. Three major expense components for us are in logistics (freight costs and timeliness of deliveries of supplies and finished products to-and-from Hawaii), taxes (assessed on beverage alcohol products by the State, Federal and County governments) and utilities (electricity, gas and water).

There is no level playing field for Hawaii manufacturers and it is impossible for us to compete on price alone. Our strategy is to produce products of exceptional quality and taste, and leverage the unique history and culture of Hawaii that is known and appreciated world-wide.

Q: Could you describe to our readers your everyday activities? In other words, how much time do you dedicate to product development, research, marketing, etc.?

Initially, during the startup phase, I was hands-on and fully involved with the permitting, design, construction, integration and day-to-day operation of the distillery. Subsequently, we were able to assemble what is truly an amazing team of talented and experienced individuals who contribute immeasurably in their fields of expertise. As a result, I am now able to focus more closely on strategic planning, special projects, marketing and business development.

Q: Have you seen any changes in

consumer palates over the years? Have you had to adjust your rum lineup to keep up with changing patterns in the market, or has your target market remained unchanged over the years?

As a single-batch, craft distiller in Hawaii, we essentially have two markets. Initially, local consumers were skeptical about how good our products would actually be; however, we have since proved ourselves and now enjoy extraordinary support from the Hawaii market. Now, with distribution and sales expanding outside of Hawaii, we are finding that there is growing interest in hand-crafted distilled spirits and a demand for products that meet or exceed the increasingly high expectations of sophisticated consumers and mixologists. As we continue to penetrate and gain traction in markets outside of Hawaii, Kōloa Rum is clearly gaining the attention, respect and support of discriminating consumers and the trade.

Q: Have you seen a change in how consumers perceive rum since your involvement in the industry?

I travel extensively in support of our brand and my sense is that there is growing interest, acceptance and appreciation for rum. It seems that rum has always had somewhat of a 'blue-collar' reputation and generally not regarded as a desirable drink for discerning or sophisticated palates. This has always seemed unfair, especially when considering that rum played such an

important role in early U.S. history, and has such unique flavor and mixing characteristics. I have always heard that rum will be the next category to 'take-off' and that it will enjoy a huge run-up in popularity and price, similar to that which occurred with tequila and vodka. Whether rum will follow suit, or not, remains to be seen. What I can say is that all of us at Kōloa Rum will continue doing everything we can to make sure that it does!



Q: I understand that Kōloa was recently awarded with "Exporter for the Year for Kauai". Congratulations! Can you tell us a little more about this accomplishment?

Thank you! We were very pleased to receive the award from the Small Business Administration. We are fortunate, in that consumers have responded well to Kōloa Rum and there is definitely a growing demand for our products. Consequently, Kōloa Rum is now available in select markets in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Nevada, Minnesota, Illinois, Georgia, Washington, DC and Western Canada. Beyond that, it will soon be available in Australia and China, and we are exploring several interesting opportunities in South-East Asia and Europe. It seems that people everywhere associate positively with Hawaii and consumers are very receptive to trying products made in the islands. It is especially gratifying for us in having the opportunity to share Kōloa Rum, a bit of Hawaii and our Aloha with the world!

Q: Do you have any advice for anyone who is considering starting his/her own distillery in the USA?

The beverage alcohol industry is hyper-competitive, highly regulated and one that should not be entered into casually. However, if it is your dream and you believe you have what it takes to succeed, then go for it. My advice would be: Do your homework, make sure that you are adequately funded, and prepare yourself mentally and physically for what will likely be a long, tough road ahead. Most importantly, keep your eye on the prize, and don't forget to have fun! This can be a great business and, with the right attitude and a little luck, it can be very rewarding.

Q: Do you offer tours of your facility and/or tastings?

Unfortunately, local regulations do not allow public access to our primary distillery; however, our Tasting Room and Company Store at Kilohana Plantation is open daily and tastings are free to the public.

Q: If people want to contact you or want to know how to get a hold of your rums, how may they reach you?

info@koloarum.com (808) 332-9333

Q: Is there a particular message or comment you would like to share with our readers?

All of us associated with the rum industry sincerely appreciate Rum Runner Press, Inc. and we thank you for all that you do to inform, educate and entertain. "Got Rum?" is an important and valuable resource and it should be required reading for anyone who is interested in rum and our industry. Aloha and Mahalo!



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RUM IN HISTORY



April Through The Years

1485 - Bartholomew Columbus is sent by his brother to France and England in hopes that he may interest Charles VIII or Henry VII in outfitting an expedition to Asia, but Bartholomew is not successful.

1601 - The East India Company's James Lancaster institutes lemon juice doses among his crew while at the Cape of Good Hope, then heaves off to Madagascar to take on more lemons and oranges. His 200 men are the only crew not decimated by scurvy.

1485

1535

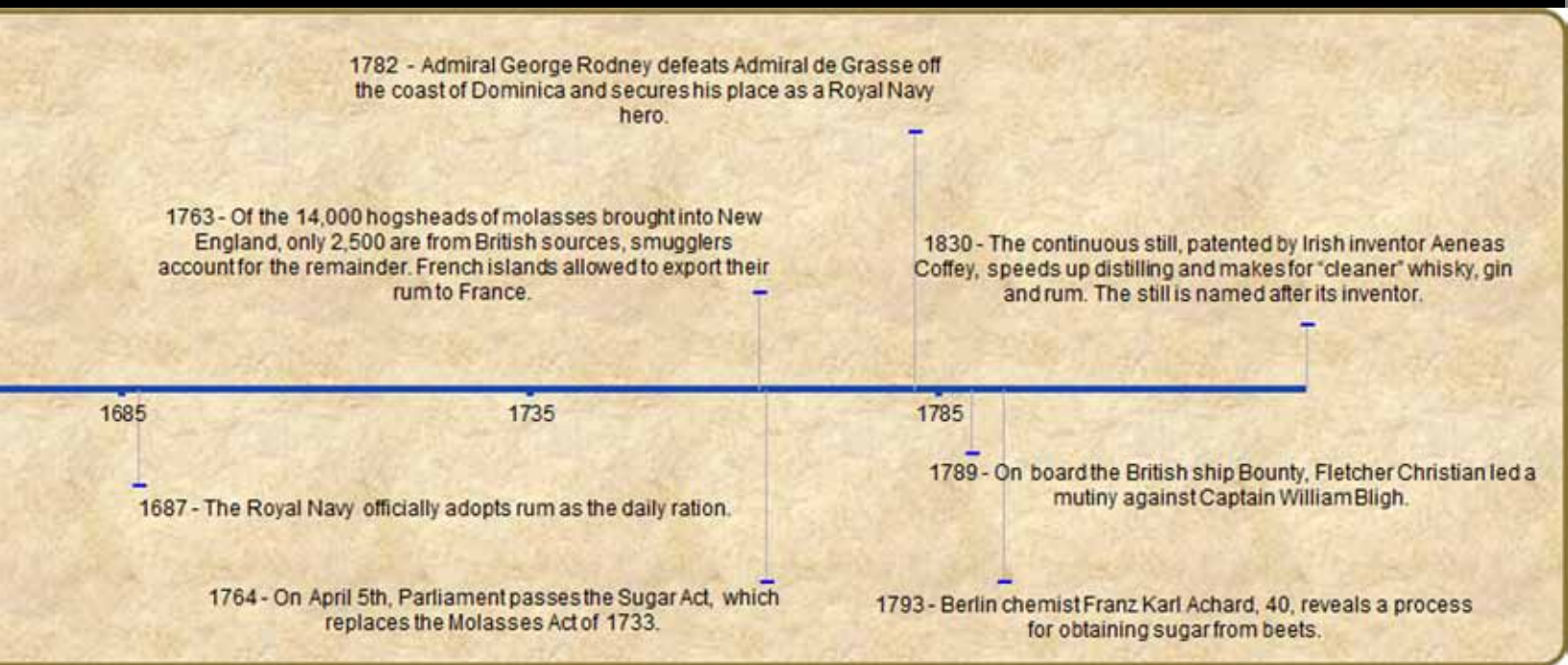
1585

1635

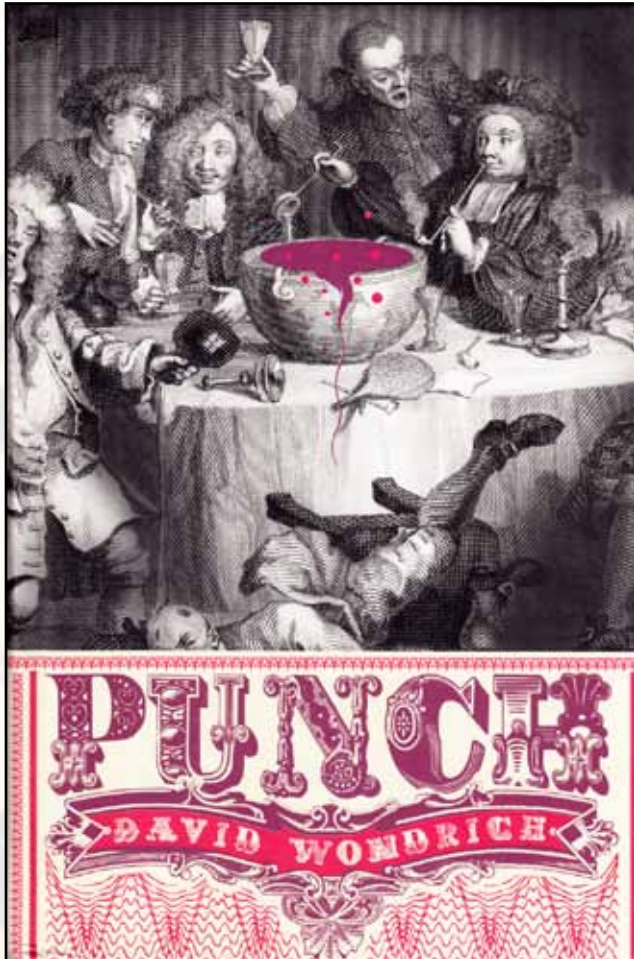
1513 - Spanish explorer Ponce De Leon sights Florida and claims it for the Spanish Crown after landing at the site of present day St. Augustine, now the oldest city in the continental U.S.



Ever wondered what happened
in the month of **APRIL**
throughout history?



RUM LIBRARY



This book rejoices the reader far beyond its ability to deliver magnificent, time-tested punch recipes: it provides an insightful look into the societal conditions that led to the popularity of sophisticated imbibing and the historical impact of such trends. Mr. Wondrich's style is elegant, yet colorfully-poignant, always keeping the reader interested in devouring the upcoming sentence.

Those only interested in the recipes will not be disappointed, although the author might, since the book clearly shows how much work went into making it far more than a recipe collection. There are punches for aficionados of Arrack, Brandy, Rum, Milk, Whiskey and Gin.

Rum enthusiasts will be delighted to experiment recreating famous recipes such as that for Glasgow Punch which, despite its name, calls for "Jamaica Rum" as one of its signature ingredients.

One particularly-amusing paragraph recounts Bermuda's Lieutenant Governor in 1724 description of the island's General Assembly members who, in his words preferred to spend their days

"wandering from one uninhabited Island to another (in their sloops), fishing for wrecks, and trading with Pyrat's, and living not like animals that are imbued with reason."

It was difficult to gather these people, but when that happened, he continues,

"It is fitter to be imagin'd, that for me to tell ... the effects which Rum Punch produces in an Assembly of 36 men, such as I have describ'd."

This book should be required reading for serious bartenders and hosts, as it helps understand the origin of many of our modern drinking traditions, and also helps preserve them properly.

As if all this were not enough, the book also gratifies the imagination with its clever selection of images, some from famous museums, others from the author's private collection.

This has been one of the most refreshing and informative books I've had the pleasure of reading in recent times. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

-Margaret Ayala



Cañal en Flor (Blooming Sugarcane Field)

by Alfredo Espino

Eran mares los cañales
que yo contemplaba un día
(mi barca de fantasía
bogaba sobre esos mares).

El cañal no se enguirnalda
como los mares, de espumas;
sus flores más bien son plumas
sobre espadas de esmeralda...

Los vientos -niños perversos-
bajan desde las montañas,
y se oyen entre las cañas
como deshojando versos...

Mientras el hombre es infiel,
tan buenos son los cañales,
porque teniendo puñales,
se dejan robar la miel...

Y qué triste la molienda
aunque vuela por la hacienda
de la alegría el tropel,
porque destrozan entrañas
los trapiches y las cañas...
¡vierten lágrimas de miel!

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PAIRING TOBACCO & RUM



By Philip Ili Barake, Cigar Sommelier



Boxing Night

For this pairing I wanted to see how two very distinct rums would pair up against a cigar of average intensity. This pairing unfolds as a boxing match, where two fighters with different qualities compete to see who is the last one standing.

In the blue corner we had **Mount Gay Extra Old Rum** from Barbados; this rum comes from the oldest rum distillery in the world, dating back to 1703. This rum uses both techniques of distillation (pot still and continuous column stills), both aged in oak barrels from Kentucky.

This rum has characteristic notes of toasted barrels, a little past their prime, in my opinion, during my initial analysis. It demonstrated some notes of Guaiacol

that was very distinct on the palate with a medium body at the end.

And in the red corner, we had a super premium rum from Guyana from the Demerara Distillery. This rum is **El Dorado Single Barrel EHP**, these acronyms correspond to Edward Henry Porter, founder of the distillery (still using a wooden Coffey Still). This El Dorado offering is an honest rum: silky, very easy to sip neat, especially when compared to other rums that are harsh on the palate or that have aggressive toasted notes.

Lighting up the cigar was the equivalent of “ringing the bell” at the beginning of a fight. In this case I chose a pyramid H. Upmann from Cuba, better known as Upmann N°2, with a ring gauge of 52 and 156 mm in length which would give us a fight of at least an hour.

While I was enjoying the first few puffs of the cigars, as far as I was concerned, I got an excellent circulation with a unique taste very distinctive of this brand, it was truly an incredible pyramid.

As I began to observe how the cigar was mixing with the rum, I received a very shocking surprise: the heavy notes of toasted oak (present on the palate more



than in the nose) began to disappear and I found myself with a very pleasing interplay of flavors and aromas, even though the burnt wood scent was present, it was quite enjoyable.

In the case of the El Dorado Single Barrel, its elegance and finesse did not give me a very good start with the cigar. It was somewhat plain, but not unpleasant; rather it did not demonstrate an overall note.

Then, two-thirds of the way into the cigar, the pairing was quite clear, the cigar had an excellent burn without having changed much of its aromas, while continuing to respect the brand's lineage. The cigar, all the while, was being paired with the Mount Gay Extra Old, with its subtle notes of Guaiacol which were no longer bothersome and turned out to be a nice match with the cigar.

THE RUM

El Dorado Single Barrel (Guyana)

THE CIGAR

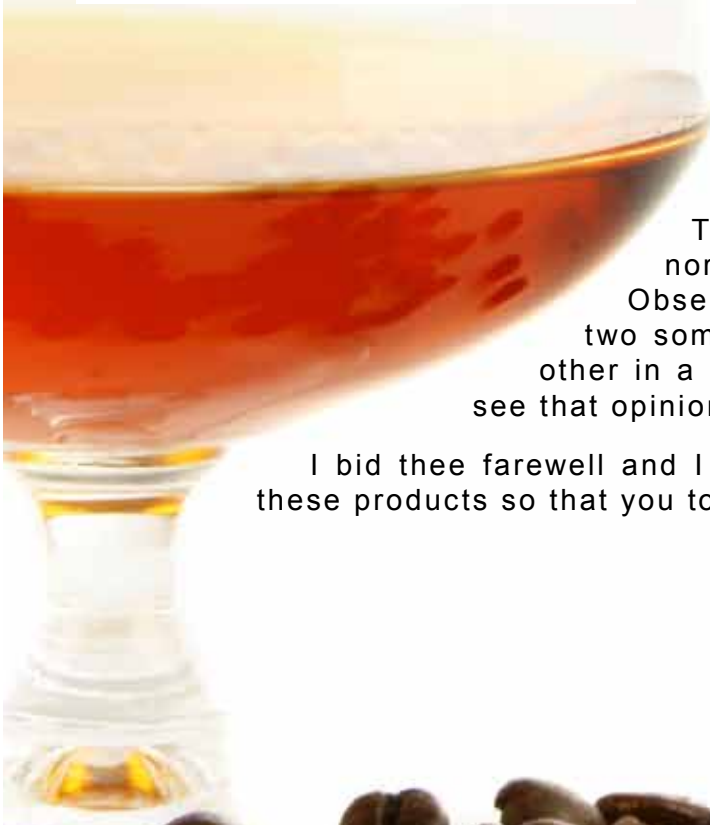
H. Upmann N°2 (Cuba)

On the other hand, the El Dorado Single Barrel EHP continued to show its true elegance, unable to reach a high technical level for the pairing. This, by no means, meant that this was a bad rum, on the contrary, it was an excellent product that should be sipped neat and well respected when served with a single ice cube. Without a doubt, this rum was one that could be consumed slowly with no worries the rest of the evening.

To wrap things up, a pairing is not a rule, nor should it be written to be treated as such. Observe, see just how the "participants" are doing, two somewhat different rums competing against each other in a pairing that is not so far-fetched and you will see that opinions will vary.

I bid thee farewell and I hope you will have the opportunity to obtain these products so that you too can experience this amazing pairing.

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