

Got Rum?™

JUNE 2014

FROM THE GRASS TO YOUR GLASS!

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW - ANGEL'S SHARE
- BARTENDER'S CORNER - RUM HISTORIAN -
RUM IN THE NEWS - TOBACCO & RUM**



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ON THE COVER: Sugarcane Bagasse.

INSIDE COVER: Serene view, Boca Chica, Dominican Republic. Photo by Luis Ayala.

FROM THE EDITOR

Rum's Treacherous Journey

As rum distributors or retailers attempt to increase their sales volumes, they often ask rum producers to reduce their costs of goods. Those who agree can do so by decreasing the alcoholic strength of the rum, by reducing the quality or age of the rum, or through other creative ways.

When these actions go un-checked and un-regulated, the result is always the same: the perception of rum as a quality-distilled product is damaged and consumer or trade confidence in the category starts to fade.

Fortunately for rum, there is a gathering of Rum Master Blenders and Distillers, Directors and CEOs, all focused on the long-term improvement of rum. I am, of course, referring to the Congreso del Ron, which celebrates its third year this month in Madrid, Spain.

I have been honored to be named Commissioner General of the conferences and the competition that comprise the event. I have been involved in many heated round tables where Master Blenders from around the world describe their short and long-term challenges and then sit back and explore quality-centric, long-term solutions with their peers. The same happens at an executive or managerial level, where plans and strategies are developed to protect markets, influence the development or modification of government norms and regulations.

As I've written previously in this column, rum is constantly adapting to



a changing environment. The product inside the bottle is a testament of everything the producers have had to do to remain profitable. I don't want to envision a world where these companies have to face their challenges alone, so I am extremely grateful for the labor being done by the organizers of the Congreso del Ron to provide a safe haven for like-minded distillers and bottlers to strategize about ways in which rum's quality can improve and endure.

My glass is raised high, my gaze fixed on the horizon. Cheers!

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

Luis Ayala, *Editor and Publisher*

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

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

THE ANGEL'S SHARE



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!

Bayou Spiced Rum

A few years ago I had the opportunity to meet with the founders of Louisiana Spirits. They discussed their dreams and ideas about building and developing a brand of rums that captured the character of Louisiana and the spirit of its people. Then, over the next couple of years via web updates, I watched them make that dream manifest in Lacassine, Louisiana from ground breaking to the installation of their stills. Today they have a cutting edge distillery and visitors center that includes a tasting room and gift shop which is the proud home of Bayou Rum.

Their rums are created using a combination of molasses and unrefined cane sugar from locally grown sugar cane. They also use locally produced ingredients for their rum. For more information about the company and their production processes, please check out Margaret Ayala's interview with Trey Litel, President of Louisiana Spirits in the March 2014 issue of Got Rum? magazine.

Appearance/Presentation

The custom-made square-based 750 ml bottle is quite distinctive and really stands out on the shelf. The black, red, and gold label with its Black Gator successfully captures the vibe and character iconic to Louisiana. I particularly like the embossing on the bottle from the shape of Louisiana state on the neck to the T-Boy (man steering

a small boat) found on the bottom of the bottle, and logos on the side. The gold rum is sealed with a plastic cork with the T-Boy on top of the cap. The liquid only lightens slightly when it is poured in the glass.

Nose

After the pour the sweet aroma of the rum wafts from the glass. I immediately detected a nice pop of cinnamon, followed by vanilla, sweet banana, hint of clove, and allspice.

Palate

The rum has a full bodied mouth feel; caramel and vanilla carry the base line as the spices mingle, play, and pop in the middle and top of the palate. There is some interesting heat at the midpoint with a lightly spicy bitterness at the finish.

Review

The blend of spices in the rum makes it a bit difficult to differentiate them from one another. The interplay is finely woven and pop quickly back and forth with a nice balance of spice and heat. The aroma was the best way to pick out some of the spices, but I am absolutely sure I did not get all of them. At the end, I was pleased with the product and like the uniqueness of the flavor profile compared to other spiced products. When I experimented with it in Coca-Cola the spices really came out to play and transmuted the soda into something unique. I think this uniqueness would lend it to be an interesting rum to cook with and might add an interesting pop to a spiced rum trifle or cupcake recipe.



www.bayourum.com

THE ANGEL'S SHARE

Caña Brava

Caña Brava is a creation of Master Blender Francisco “Don Pancho” Fernandez. When the 86 Co. decided to develop an “old school” blanco rum for the bar trade, they began developing the spirit with Don Pancho at the Las Cabres Distillery. Using sugar cane grown in the Herrera region of Panama, they distill their rum from molasses using Pineapple yeast for fermentation. During distillation the rum is run through five column stills using copper and brass plates. Before the rum is put in the barrel for aging it is blended down to 75% ABV.

The rum is aged in two parts: In stage one it is aged in new American oak barrels for 18-24 months. After the rum completes stage one it is blended down to 49% ABV and aged for a minimum of one year in used American Whiskey and Bourbon Barrels. After stage two is complete the rum is blended with an older rum and brought down to 86 proof, then put through a three part filtration process. The rum is then shipped to the U.S. and bottled in California.

Appearance/Presentation

Caña Brava’s crystal clear rum in a tall one liter custom bottle secured with a red screw cap. When they say this product was developed for the trade, I believe them. Everything about the design of the bottle is easy to handle from the size of the neck to the grooves

in the body of the bottle. Even the side of the bottle has measurements showing how much liquid is remaining in it.

Nose

The rum has a nice fruity aroma. I detected a mix of lemon and limes, sweet cane, honey, and cantaloupe.

Palate

The rum lit the palate with a sweet vanilla swirl, balanced by tart citrus, smoky cocoa and oak take over and linger into the finish.

Review

When 86 Co. set out to develop this rum it was with the goal of producing a quality ingredient rum that would be good in cocktails like Daiquiris. The first drink I made with it was a classic daiquiri and it did not disappoint. We then experimented with it making other cocktails and noticed it provided a nice bump to any recipe that had a citrus base. Not a surprise considering the strong citrus notes detected in the profile. I suspect it would work well with other fruit juices, but would avoid it with strong syrup flavors like cola that would bury its positive attributes.

While working with the rum, my wife came up with a nice Rum Collins recipe using Caña Brava as its core ingredient:

Featured Cocktail

- 1 1/2 oz. Caña Brava
- Juice of 1 Lemon, squeezed
- 1/2 oz. Simple Syrup (or Demararra Simple Syrup)
- Club Soda

Add the first 3 ingredients to a double old fashioned glass with ice; stir. Top with club soda. Garnish with lemon peel, mint and rosemary.



canabrarum.com

INTERNATIONAL RUM CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE - Madrid, Spain

Tuesday, June 3, 2014

- 9:30-10:00 Conference Registration, sponsored by Bacardi
- 10:00-10:45 "Welcome to the III International Rum Conference 2014" By Javier Herrera (Conference Director)
- 10:45-11:30 "Quo Vadis Rum? (Where is Rum Going?)" by Jean Paul Bouyat from Spain (Bardinet)
- 11:30-12:00 Break
- 12:00-12:45 "Rum by a Master" by Master Blender José Sánchez Gavito from Cuba (Bacardi)
- 12:45-13:30 "Evolution and Extinction in the Rum Industry" by Luis Ayala from USA ("Got Rum?" Magazine, The Rum University)
- 13:30-15:30 Break
- 15:30-16:15 "Chemical variations in the characteristics of aging rums, dependence on environmental temperature" by Master Blender Andres Contreras from Venezuela (Ron Ocumare, CLC)
- 16:15-17:00 "The Barrel Aging of Rum" by Ramón Cendoya from Spain (Grupo Radoux)
- 17:00-17:30 Break
- 17:30-18:15 "The Great Book of Rum" by Davide Staffa from Italy
- 18:15-19:00 "Rum Mixology" by David Córdoba from Argentina (Bacardi)
- 19:00-19:45 "Pure Spirit" by David Herrero from Spain
- 20:30-23:00 International Rum Conference (IRC) Award Ceremony
VIP Party, Sponsored by Bacardi

INTERNATIONAL **RUM** CONFERENCE

Wednesday, June 4, 2014

- 10:00-10:45 "The USA and it's Influence on Global Rum Trends"
By Luis Ayala from the USA ("Got Rum?" Magazine, The Rum University)
- 10:45-11:30 "Rhum Arrangé: Trend-Setting Rums in France" by Benoit Bail and Jerry Gitany
from France (Zwazo and Christian de Montaguère)
- 11:30-12:00 Break
- 12:00-12:45 "Rum in Europe: Rules and Regulations" by Elena Martín from Spain
(Federación Española de Bebidas Espirituosas)
- 12:45-13:30 "Rum Production Processes and Tendencies, Part II" By Roberto Serralles
from Puerto Rico (Serralles)
- 13:30-15:30 Break
- 15:30-16:15 "Rum, a Global Vision" by José Ballesteros de Venezuela (Ron Diplomático)
- 16:15-17:00 "In Search for the Origins of Rum" by Marco Pierini from Italy (La Casa del Rum)
- 17:00-17:30 Break
- 17:30-18:15 "Diversity in the Use of Rum" Master Blender Tomas Cano from Nicaragua
(Compañía Licorera de Nicaragua SA)
- 18:15-19:00 "Analysis of the 2013-2014 Rum Market" By Javier Herrera from Spain
(Sponsored by IWSR)
- 19:00-19:30 "Rum Industry Quality Certification Program (IRC)" by Luis Ayala from USA
("Got Rum?", The Rum University) and Javier Herrera (Conference Director)

Closing of the III International Rum Conference, Madrid 2014

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MADRID, **SPAIN** 2014
www.CongresoDelRon.com

Bartender's Corner

by Dr. Ron A. Ćejo



When studying the history of a country, some scholars undoubtedly head to the libraries, to read and re-read manuscripts of yesteryear. I, on the other hand, prefer to start by exploring the culinary and mixological legacy of the bygone eras: I head to the bars and pubs!

Early colonial America was a constantly changing landscape. The recipes for their contemporary cookery and drinkery are a window into that time.

Join me as I journey through the best of what has survived, as I explore the drinks that forged and survived the growth of the American nation.

-Dr. Ron A. Ćejo

Early American Rum Cocktails - Part 6

Early American Rum Cocktails #6: Mississippi Punch

(An excerpt from Jerry Thomas' Bartenders Guide: How To Mix Drinks, 1862)

Regarding Punch:

"To make punch of any sort in perfection, the ambrosial essence of the lemon must be extracted by rubbing lumps of sugar on the rind, which breaks the delicate little vessels that contain the essence, and at the same time absorbs it. This, and making the mixture sweet and strong, using tea instead of water, and thoroughly amalgamating all the compounds, so that the taste of neither the bitter, the sweet, the spirit, nor the element, shall be perceptible one over the other, is the grans secret, only to be acquired by practice.

The precise portions of spirit and water, or even of the acidity and sweetness, can have no general rule, as scarcely two persons make punch alike."

Mississippi Punch

1 Wine-Glass of Brandy
½ Wine-Glass of Jamaican Rum
½ Wine-Glass of Bourbon Whisky
½ Wine-Glass of Water
1 ½ Tablespoon Powdered White Sugar
¼ Large Lemon

Directions

Fill a tumbler with shaved ice. The ingredients must be well shaken, and to those who like their draughts "like linked sweetness long drawn out", let them use a glass tube or straw to sip the nectar through. Pour into a large bar glass. The top of this punch should be ornamented with small pieces of orange and berries (in season). Cocktail photo from www.esquire.com



THE RUM HISTORIAN



My name is Marco Pierini, I own and run a small tourist business in my seaside town in Tuscany, Italy. A long time ago I got a degree in Philosophy in Florence, Italy, and I studied Political Science in Madrid, Spain. But my real passion has always been History. Through History I have always tried to know the world, and men. Life brought me to work in tourism, event organization and vocational training. A few years ago I discovered rum and it was love at first sight. Now, with my young business partner Francesco Rufini I run a bar on the beach, La Casa del Rum (The House of Rum), and we distribute Premium Rums across Tuscany.

And most of all, finally I have returned back to my initial passion: History. Only, now it is the History of Rum.

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 flavours; it has a terrible and fascinating history, made of slaves and pirates, imperial fleets and revolutions. And it has a complicated, interesting present too, made of political and commercial wars, of big multinationals, but also of many small and medium-sized enterprises that resist trivialization.

I try to cover all of this in my Italian blog on Rum, www.ilsecolodelrum.it

RUM AMONG THREE EMPIRES

In the second half of the XVII century, when rum starts its triumphal march, three great colonial Empires divide up most of the Caribbean.

The Spanish Empire still dominates the main islands, Cuba, Portorico, part of Santo Domingo. The French Empire keeps Martinique, other smaller islands and part of Santo Domingo (now Haiti) under its tight control. The English Empire has long occupied Barbados and other smaller islands, and in 1655 it succeeds in wresting the great island of Jamaica from the Spanish.

Sugarcane was grown everywhere, therefore rum could be produced everywhere. But the choices of the three European countries were completely different.

In this article we are going to look at the relationship between the three empires and rum in the century in-between the emergence of rum in Barbados and Martinique, around 1650 and 1756.

Let us start from the oldest, the Spanish Empire:

Spain was a major producer of wine and brandy. A significant part of this production was exported to the Spanish colonies in America and to Northern European countries, among them England. The Spanish producers of wine and brandy saw rum as a threat to their interests and got the government to discourage the production of alcoholic beverages in the colonies with all the means at its disposal.



Bans on growing grapes, bans on the sale of alcoholic beverages to the natives, prohibition to sell local alcoholic beverages in the towns, and so on.

Over time, a long succession of laws were introduced, which forbade distillation, with the most brutal punishments. These laws were not always fully enforced (through and through), but surely they negatively affected the development of rum production. To this we must add the decline of sugar production, which has not yet been fully explained by historians, and a diminished fondness of Spanish people for strong distilled beverages. As a result, rum production in the Spanish colonies was, for a long time, limited and of low quality.

France too was a great producer and exporter of wine and brandy. French producers too feared the competition of rum. But the choice of the French government was totally different. Rum production was never banned. What was banned, instead, was the export of rum to France. It was allowed, though, to export rum to Canada, then a French colony, to Africa, where it was traded off for slaves, and to all foreign countries. In particular, great quantities of rum and molasses were exported, indeed often smuggled, into the thirteen colonies of North America.

Moreover, in the French colonies sugar production was thriving and the French were fonder of strong liquors than were the Spanish. Therefore, rum production in the French colonies of the Caribbean was always significant and of relatively good quality.

England did not produce wine or brandy. On the other hand, English people drank heavily, they had always done. They imported wine and brandy mainly from France and Spain. And they paid good money for them. It was a constant flow of wealth which left the English shores to boost the coffers of its most dangerous enemies. Therefore England, or better, by now the British Empire, dealt with the new beverage in an entirely different way.

Instead of forbidding or limiting the production and exports of rum, the British Empire promoted it in all possible ways, trying to substitute rum for imported wine and brandy.

It was not an easy undertaking and it took time, and certainly it was not pain-free for the health of many British subjects.

But it was successful. The British Empire quickly became the most important producer and consumer of rum. And rum was considered something typically British. More on that later.

RUM IN THE NEWS

by Mike Kunetka

A stack of newspapers is visible on the left side of the image. In the center, four white wooden blocks are arranged in a row, spelling out the word 'NEWS' in large, black, sans-serif capital letters. The blocks are resting on a light-colored wooden surface.

RUM NATION

Fabio Rossi started Rum Nation in 1999 after years in the wine and whisky business. His company may be based in Italy, but he purchases select rums from remarkable distilleries throughout the Caribbean. The rums are further aged in Italy and released in limited editions.

The latest from Fabio is his 12 year old Rum Nation Barbados Anniversary Edition, celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of Rum Nation. The rum was distilled by R.L. Searle in Barbados in 2001 and aged in American Bourbon barrels. It was then shipped to Italy where it spent another two years aging in Brandy and Sherry barrels.

You can read more about the Barbados Anniversary rum, as well as other rums from Jamaica, Demerara, Martinique and Panama at www.rumnation.com.

CAPTAIN MORGAN

In 1671, Captain Henry Morgan fought a mighty battle in Panama City and captured Fort San Lorenzo. During the battle, Morgan lost five ships, including his flagship, the Satisfaction. This battle serves as marketing inspiration for Captain

Morgan's latest limited spice rum, Captain Morgan 1671. It is made at the new Diageo facility in St. Croix and incorporates a spice blend that is different from other Captain Morgan rums. The new Captain is bottled at 70 proof in a jug-like bottle with a finger hole that makes you want to throw it over your shoulder and take a pirate-sized swallow.

BACARDI

Following their launch last November of the super-premium Facundo Rum Collection, Bacardi will be releasing a new white sipping rum called Bacardi Gran Reserva. It is a blend of rums that have been aged up to three years and then slow-filtered through coconut shell charcoal, resulting in a smooth white rum intended to be enjoyed neat or over ice.

Gran Reserva will be packaged in a unique green-tinted bottle with a wax seal and wood stopper. It will only be available at 'Travel Retail Outlets', i.e. airport liquor stores.

PLANTATION RUM

Cognac Ferrand has always dealt with the finest distilleries in the Caribbean, selling them their coveted casks that once held their fine brandies. This

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 landlocked rum enthusiast, he is based in Colorado, USA and is our newest contributor.

relationship took a new turn when they discovered small batches of very fine, old rum at these distilleries.

In the hands of the master blenders at Gognac Ferrand, these fine rums are blended, aged a second time and then bottled in limited releases. Last year's offering was the Plantation 3 Stars white rum, a skillful blend of the best the Caribbean has to offer from Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad. Each Island has a distinct rum style developed over centuries and brings its own special character to Plantation 3 Stars Silver Rum: matured Trinidad rum imparts its classic elegance, Barbados delivers sophistication with a balanced mouth feel and Jamaica conveys its unmistakable structure and rustic edge.

This year's offering will be Plantation Original Dark, a blend of brown rums from Trinidad that is double aged. First, the blend spends time in Trinidad in American oak barrels. Then it rests in medium-toasted Cognac Ferrand French oak barrels for another twelve to eighteen months.

Further details about these two rums and other fine rums from Barbados, Guatemala, Jamaica, Panama and Nicaragua can be found at www.plantationrhum.com.

AMERICAN DISTILLING INSTITUTE 2014 ANNUAL JUDGING OF CRAFT SPIRITS AWARDS

No fooling, the ADI Craft Spirit Awards were announced April 1st at their annual convention in Seattle, Washington.

A Gold Medal and Best of Class award was given to Canon Beach Distillery's Donlon Shanks Rum. Another Gold Medal went to Louisiana Spirits Distillery for their Bayou Rum Spiced.

Silver medals went to Delaware Distilling Company for their Spiced Rum, Portside Distillery for their Vanilla Maple Rum, New Holland Artisan Spirits for their Freshwater Michigan Rum and Ballast Point Brewing and Spirits for their Barrel Aged Three Sheets Rum. Cape Spirits, Portside Distillery, Spirits of Maine Distillery and Lost Spirits Distillery all took home Bronze Medals.

Congratulations and cheers to all!

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW



First and foremost, I want to thank Mr. Benoît Bail, owner of Liqueurs et Spiritueux, for taking the time for this exclusive interview. Mr. Bail first reached out to Luis and I via LinkedIn and then sent us a bottle of each of his fruit infused rums. Once we received his rums and read up on his company, I thought this would be a great company to interview! Mr. Bail's idea of using natural and organic fruits with his rums and using recycled products for his packaging was very intriguing. So it gives me great pleasure to bring to you, our readers, Mr. Bail's story. I wish him all the very best!


Margaret Ayala, Publisher

Q: What are your full name, title, and company name and company location?

My full name is Benoit Bail. I'm creator and owner of "Bail B. - Liqueurs et Spiritueux". The company is located in Luxembourg.

Q: What inspired you to get started in the rum industry?

At the beginning I was just an ordinary rum amateur, like anybody else and I prepared my own infused rums for me



and my friends. Suddenly, more and more people asked me if they could buy some, because they liked it. That's the reason why I started my own company and rum brand.

Q: What rums do you currently produce?

The specificity of my products is that they're only produced with organic and seasonal products, so I change the flavors each 2 or 3 months and switch the actual flavors with new seasonal ones.

At the moment, I produced Pineapple/Vanilla rum, which is made of organic pineapples from Ivory Coast, organic bourbon vanilla beans from Madagascar and organic blonde sugar from Brazil.

The second one I produced for this season is Mango/Vanilla, which has almost the same ingredients as the pineapple, without the pineapple of course. For this one, I used fresh organic mangos from Cameroon.

Both have, as a rum base, a blend of 3 different rums from Trinidad, Guyana and Martinique.

Q: The name "Zwazo", what does it mean/stand for? What inspired you to use this name for your rums?

Zwazo is the French-creole word for bird. In the French Caribbean that's also the word they use for the hummingbirds, which are typical and present all around the Caribbean. Finally we use this word and the logo of it for our brand, because it represents the lightness of our rums and the typical exotic taste of it.

Q: Is there something unique about your rums? The way they are made, ingredients, water, etc...?

My rums are unique, first of all because they are produced in Luxembourg. Today, there's no other rum brand in this country then Zwazo.

Then, the blend I use is also specially produced for the brand and is made of 3 different molasses rums for a better taste and a well combination of more types of rums.

Q: What kind of shelf life do your rums have (considering that you are using organic ingredients)?

That's a good question because mostly, once the bottles are opened, people can't stop drinking it until it's empty.

The product continues infusing into the alcohol as long as it is inside of it and the aromas are getting more intensive with the time. So as longer you let it, better it will become.

Q: If the price of the fruits and spices you use goes up, do you absorb the cost to keep the price of your rums the same or do you increase the retail price to consumers?

I try to absorb the costs to keep the prices as low as possible for the consumers, even if it's not easy, especially because of the prices of the organic main ingredients which are increasing.

Q: Are you aware that FDA regulations (regarding fresh fruit in the bottles) will not allow you to sell your rums in the USA? How do you feel about this?

I'm aware about that and know that my products won't be on the US market because of this. At the beginning, I was starting this for the local market in Luxembourg and it's actually getting bigger in Europe, where these techniques are allowed, so I never imagined selling my products in the USA for the moment. I would already be happy by completely covering the European market.

If one day I would have to sell my products on the US markets, I would have to change my recipes and bottling, but we're far away from there yet.

Q: In addition to using natural and organic fruits and spices for your rums, you also took the environment into consideration when designing the packaging for each of your products. Can you tell us a little bit more about the packaging?

Yes, it's true that I'm very conscious about the environment and its actual situation. I think that a lot of things can be done in a greener way, especially in the rum market, a little like Bacardi does with their global environment campaign.

On my level, that's the reason why I try to make the packaging of Zwazo rums as green and ecologic as possible, by using natural or recycled materials like those from recycled paper made hangtags, plus the using of hangtags makes it possible of not using any kind of glue on my bottles.

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

Like I said before, I'm changing the flavors every 2 or 3 months. The next flavor will probably be apple/cinnamon, for which I work with some local apple producers from Luxembourg. That's also a good point by using local products and give local producers work.

Q: What countries are you currently selling your rums in? Do you have plans of expanding into other countries or the fact that you are dealing with seasonal fruits keeps you from being able to expand?

Actually, I'm selling my rums in Luxembourg of course, but also in Belgium and France. My plans would be to expand my market all around Europe. Using seasonal products doesn't change anything by dealing with other countries or becoming bigger.

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



I think that the greatest challenge was dealing with the customs. Unfortunately, even if its Europe, we're not in a federal country so there're still custom services in every country and I have to deal with all of them for import of my furniture's or export of my rums. That takes time and doesn't make it easy at all.

Q: Have you developed cocktail recipes for each of your rums or are they mainly designed to drink neat?

I prefer drinking it neat or on ice because I'm not a real cocktail fan, but a lot of bloggers all around the world and other customers tried to mix it and they had pretty nice results, like mixing Zwazo with champagne or bitter lemon.

Q: Is there a cocktail in particular that is your favorite? Why?

The only cocktail I would drink all day long is definitely the usual Caïpirinha. It's not that complicated, but not everybody can make a good Caïpirinha. Even



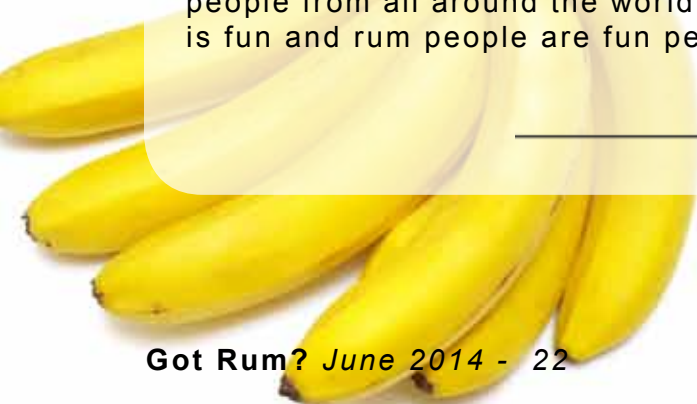
though it's usually done with cachaça, I like it because it reminds me of the Ti-Punch they do with agricole rum on the French islands, but you use to drink it in big glasses with a lot of ice and sugar. It's really refreshing during the summertime.

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

They can get all the information they need on www.zwazo.lu

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

First of all I want to thank "Got Rum?" Magazine for doing and sharing this interview and to all the readers, keep reading this amazing magazine which contributed to make me a real rum lover today and made me meet a lot a nice people from all around the world. Like a friend of mine once said to me: "Rum is fun and rum people are fun people!".





PAIRING TOBACCO & RUM



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

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

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

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

Number 15

For this pairing, I opted to chase the pleasure of the fifteens, both in the tobacco and in the rum. I selected a Rocky Patel Fifteenth Anniversary Robusto, 5 x 50, a very aggressive cigar and for the rum I chose what I consider to be a very well made rum from the Eastern part of Cuba: Ron Varadero Añejo 15 year old.

I knew from the beginning that this would not be a very easy pairing to make. Ever since I tried the Rocky Patel Fifteenth Anniversary in the Dominican Republic, it left its mark on me, like a burnt-in screen, for its excellent and tight roll. Many people who've tried it also remember this cigar for its marked strength, so you can see why pairing this is not an easy task.

Rocky Patel cigars bring together tobaccos from different countries. In this particular cigar, however, the Nicaraguan blend comes across in dominant fashion, even though the cigar is not 100% Nicaraguan. It



is a great example of tobaccos from this country, famous for their aggressiveness in the palate.

The first third of the cigar was wonderfully marvelous, with a draw reminiscent of black pepper and cacao that is about 70% dry. It also has earthy/unctuous notes that are very enjoyable, making this a very enjoyable experience. Now, regarding the rum...

Based on my experience, rums from Eastern Cuba (such as Caney and Santiago de Cuba) are typically light, they don't necessarily have oak notes from the barrels themselves, but rather from the rums those barrels have stored before, showcasing well-oxidized notes with sweet hints of figs and raisins that are a perfect match against the tannic notes from the first third of the cigar.

As I start the second third of the cigar, the experience remained consistent, with a medium-to-high intensity, marked by notes of even drier cacao, perhaps equivalent to cacao that is 90% dry. It is possible that cacao this dry will not be appealing to many, but trust me, it is ideal when it comes to pairing a cigar with a light, dry rum, as both the cigar and the rum combine in the palate to produce long-lasting and harmonious notes. Looking back at the first time I had this cigar, I recall wishing I had a snifter of good Dominican Republic rum. And like a good self-fulfilling prophecy, I am now here, at one of my favorite places near my home, re-living the experience at the Element restaurant in Santiago, Chile, on a terrace surrounded by German-style houses, with a lot of wood trimmings. The surroundings make you forget momentarily that you are in the capital city and, believe it or not, the ambiance is one of the key factors in the enjoyment of cigars and rums. Combine this with the company and you will unequivocally agree that each pairing is unique.

But enough of romanticism, let's return to the arduous task of the





Photos: @Cigarili

pairing. Now in the heart of the smoking (the second third), I feel the rum lingering in the palate a bit longer, more pleasantly. At this precise moment, I wish I had selected, instead of the Robusto, the Vitola Toro or the Torpedo from this same line, so I could prolong this enjoyment. Could this pairing have worked with a different rum? In the past we've switched from one rum to another right at this point, going into the last third of the cigar. But to be honest, I am getting a lot of pleasure from this pairing and I consider it marvelous.

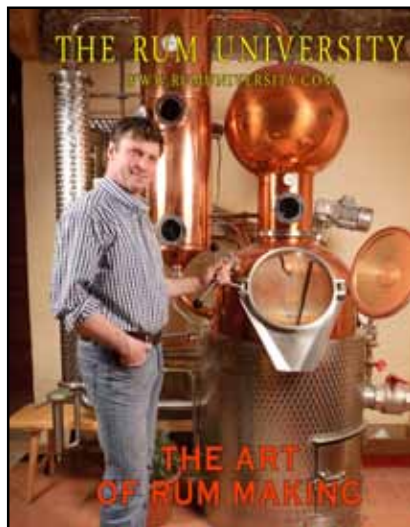


As I wrap up the last 30 minutes of smoking, I am happy to report that pairing this fifteenth anniversary cigar with a 15 year old goes beyond the number they share in common. It is a complex pairing, but is also a rewarding one; I recommend it for smokers with an average experience, who are willing to experience the aggressiveness of a Nicaraguan tobacco with an old-fashioned rum. I hope you will be able to match these two products or that you will find similar products with which to conduct your own flavor and sensation pairing.

Cheers,

Philip Ili Barake
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