

Got Rum?™

FEBRUARY 2015

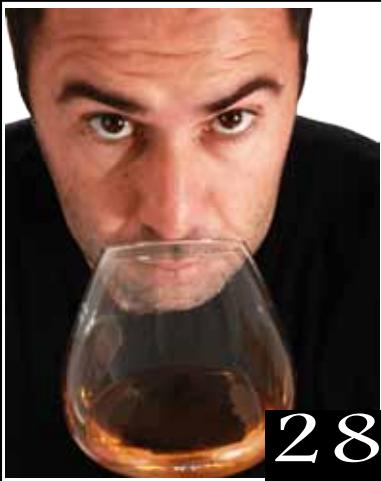
FROM THE GRASS TO YOUR GLASS!



**COOKING WITH RUM - ANGEL'S SHARE - CIGAR & RUM -
BARTENDER'S CORNER - RUM HISTORIAN -
RUM IN THE NEWS - EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW -
RUM UNIVERSITY - RUM LIBRARY**



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Got Rum?



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Got Rum?

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ON THE COVER: Romantic Berry Cocktail

INSIDE COVER: Valentine's Day Candy Grams

FROM THE EDITOR

The Truth About Sugarcane Waste

Sugarcane is a very generous plant. Processing it yields sugarcane juice, evaporated cane juice, sugar crystals, molasses and bagasse. Which of these by-products are the 'waste'? Merriam-Webster dictionary defines waste as:

"damaged, defective, or superfluous (un-necessary or of no value) material produced by a manufacturing process."

Under this definition, none of the by-products of processing the cane can be considered waste. Agricole rum producers (and their fans) often chant about how molasses is a waste and rums made from that waste are therefore inferior. To this, some molasses-rum producers are responding by pointing out that the un-pasteurized, un-refined fresh juice is full of undesirable bacteria that are safely removed through the clarification and crystallization processes at the mills.

The reality is that most molasses used to produce rum contains an average of 50% fermentable sugars, this is why it is very useful in the manufacture of rum. If you think that something that is still 50% usable should be considered waste, then start throwing away your wine, milk, water and rum bottles after they are half empty!

For rum producers who also cultivate and process sugarcane, the only by-product that could be considered waste is bagasse. Bagasse is the dry sugarcane



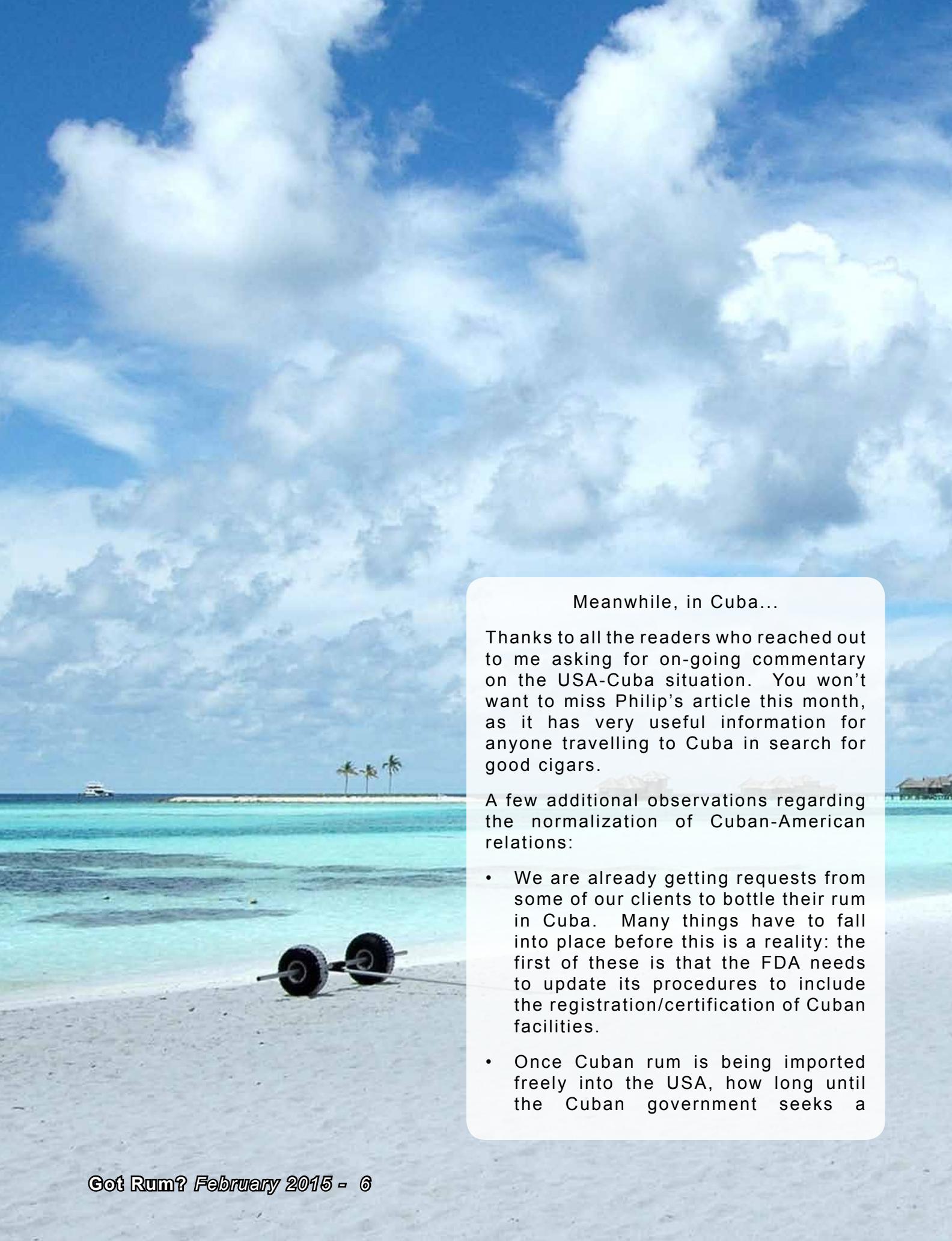
fiber that comes out of the presses after all the juice has been extracted. But even bagasse is being used as a fuel to heat up the boilers needed to produce the steam required by sugar mills and distilleries. There are alcohol plants that are even hydrolyzing the bagasse to produce fuel-grade ethanol.

Producers and brand marketers are always looking for ways to differentiate their rums from their competitors'. Just like politicians running a campaign, some rely exclusively on strategies to exalt their own virtues, while others opt instead to attack and criticize their peers.

Solid brands stand atop solid foundations that do not derive their integrity from other companies' actions or inactions.

The more solid rum/rhum brands we have in this industry, the better off we'll be.

(continued on next page)



Meanwhile, in Cuba...

Thanks to all the readers who reached out to me asking for on-going commentary on the USA-Cuba situation. You won't want to miss Philip's article this month, as it has very useful information for anyone travelling to Cuba in search for good cigars.

A few additional observations regarding the normalization of Cuban-American relations:

- We are already getting requests from some of our clients to bottle their rum in Cuba. Many things have to fall into place before this is a reality: the first of these is that the FDA needs to update its procedures to include the registration/certification of Cuban facilities.
- Once Cuban rum is being imported freely into the USA, how long until the Cuban government seeks a

Denomination of Origin, that would prevent the use of "Cuban" or "Cuban-style" on products not made 100% there?

- And how long until the "honeymoon" with Washington is over and the Cuban government joins the rest of the Caribbean nations in their quest to put an end to the Puerto Rico and USVI rum subsidies?

As you can see, we are having numerous discussions with many companies interested in -and worried about- the outcome of the "normalization" of relations between the two countries.

Cheers,



Luis Ayala, *Editor and Publisher*

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



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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!

Plantation 3 Stars

Over the years Plantation has released a prolific amount of rum from all across the Caribbean with their portfolio full of aged gold products. With 3 Stars they have boldly entered the market with a silver rum that is a blend of unaged rum from Barbados, unaged and twelve year old rum from Jamaica, and three year old rum from Trinidad. The blend is charcoal filtered to remove color and brought down to 82 proof for bottling.

Appearance/Presentation

Plantation Three Stars has the most informative labels I have ever seen. The front of the label provides the basic product information while the back is loaded with so much information it looks like a newspaper. The rum in the bottle and glass is clear. Swirling the liquid creates a thick band which forms equally thick legs that descend quickly down the glass. The ring then beads up and clings to the sides of the glass.

Nose

A swirl of tropical fruit wafts from the glass as I pour the rum. I let the rum settle and pick up notes of lime, banana, pineapple, with an undertone of vanilla, oak and coconut.

Palate

The sugary sweetness of the rum wraps the edges of the tongue while the fruit flavors manifest in the center. I clearly



pick out banana, coconut, and vanilla in the midline while an earthly oak base forms the base.

There is a pleasant funkiness that replaces the sweetness as the oak base transforms and the alcohol in the rum provides a nice pleasant burn that lasts into the finish.

Review

I first encountered Three Stars as a judge in a blind tasting and later experienced it being used as a punch ingredient. When I finally found it in the stores I began using it in classic cocktails and later, as I learned its versatility, it became a staple on my back bar for Tiki cocktails.

I especially like it in Mai Tais and Menehune juice where the fruit flavors in the profile marry well with the other ingredients. At 25 dollars a bottle this is a great deal and should be available anywhere you see Plantation products sold.



THE ANGEL'S SHARE

by Paul Senft

Rhum Damoiseau Virgin Cane Rum

Rhum Damoiseau's Virgin Cane Rum is produced at the Bellevue Estate and Distillery in Guadeloupe. The distillery was established in the 19th century and acquired by the Damoiseau family in 1942 where it has remained. Today the distillery is operated by Mr. Hervé Damoiseau. The family produces their rhum within the same demanding processes of the rhum makers of Martinique.

The rhum is produced using fresh pressed sugar cane juice then it is fermented and distilled once before it is stored in oak barrels for three to six months. After the brief aging period the rhum is blended with spring water to 40 proof.

Appearance/Presentation

The short necked 750 ml bottle is frosted with the only design being the logo and a green wisp that makes me think of a sprout of sugarcane just breaking the earth.

The liquid is crystal clear when I pour it in the glass. Agitating the liquid creates a thin ring with legs that race quickly down the side.

Nose

Everything you would expect from an Agricole is in the glass. The aroma of the sugarcane, spring flowers, with just a hint of spice tickle the nose.

Palate

I have to express that my first sip was a bit of a surprise. I was braced for a harsher spirit. Instead, I discovered a surprisingly lush mouth feel with no astringency. The sugarcane note is front and center with the light oak and spice notes forming the foundation. Subsequent sips reveal light mineral notes and a mild fusel oil twist that brings up and reignites the spicy notes that unite and linger in the finish.

Review

It is always interesting when a new agricole hits the market place. In my area, Rhum Clément and Neisson have been battling it out for years. So a new rhum from Guadeloupe grabbed my attention.

I enjoyed the lushness of the spirit and the surprising depth of such a young product. What was not a surprise is how well it played in a Ti punch and I will definitely use it in any cocktail that calls for an agricole to be in the mix.

The company also produces a Rhum Vieux VSOP and XO that I am going to have to track down and try. Stay tuned for future reviews.



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RUM IN THE NEWS

by Mike Kunetka

NEWS

OUTER BANKS DISTILLING

The Outer Banks of North Carolina is an area steeped in a history of pirates and rum. Soon it will be home of the area's first legal rum distillery, Outer Banks Distilling. Adam and Kelly Bray, Matt Newsome and Scott Smith (a collection of brewers and bartenders), have joined forces to build this new enterprise in Manteo. Combining a new Holstein pot still and a rusty old brick building, they will be releasing their first product, Kill Devil Rum. Legend has it that years ago, after a shipwreck, several barrels of 'Kill Devil', an old slang term for rum strong enough to 'kill the devil', washed up on shore in an area that is now known as Kill Devil Hills. As former local brewers, they hope to experiment with different blends of molasses, botanical infusions and aging techniques. Furthermore, the possibility of collaborating with local breweries and wineries opens the door to even more ideas, such as a rum barreled stout or Italian grappa.

CLÉMENT

Clément has introduced Mahina Coco, a bright French Caribbean coconut liqueur, crafted from luscious pieces of young coconut soused with Rhum Agricole. Mahina Coco offers a soft and sweet roundness of the tropics that can be enjoyed neat or mixed in cocktails. It is bottled at 18% ABV.

Clément has also released two Limited Edition Single Cask rums. The first is Vanille Intense. Not a spiced rum, Vanille Intense is a special expression that has been aged for eight years in 200-liter ex-Bourbon barrels, with the intent of extracting the vanillin sweetness from the wood. Clément says that the years of aging have helped focus a palette of aromas that give a 'racy' profile to this old rhum. The second Single Cask is an aged 100% Canne

Bleue (blue sugarcane). Many people feel that out of all the varieties of sugarcane grown on Martinique, the Canne Bleue is the best for making high quality rhum agricole. Clément has offered a blue sugarcane white rhum for some time, but now they have set aside some in French Oak casks for eight years. Each bottle is signed by the Cellar Master, with the bottle number, barrel number, date of aging, and sugarcane varietal on display. Both Single Cask rums are released at barrel strength, 43.6% ABV.

DAUFUSKIE ISLAND RUM COMPANY

Daufuskie Island is a small plot of land only accessible by boat from the coast of South Carolina and is now the home to the new Daufuskie Island Rum Company (DIRC). Located on a 12-acre site on Hag Point Road, DIRC just released their Silver Rum, with a Spiced Rum following in February. A Gold Rum is currently aging in Kentucky Bourbon barrels and will be available in July. DIRC's owner, Tony Chase, wants to create a true American Island Rum, using exclusively American ingredients. The stills and fermenters are hand crafted in Alabama by Paul Caldwell of the Confederate Stills of Alabama. The bottles come from the Waterloo bottle company in upstate New York. The yeast strains were developed and cultivated in California and the sugar is grown in South Florida. Tony has set aside a portion of the property to grow his own sugarcane. It will not be enough to feed all his production, but it will certainly be able to be incorporated in some of his product. Maybe a Daufuskie Island Rhum Agricole in the future?

BACARDI

Bacardi has announced that interim CEO Mike Dolan will continue that position on a permanent basis. In a recent letter to shareholders,

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.

Bacardi stated "Having used his brief period of initiation in the Interim CEO role to gain an even deeper insight into the company's brands and its people, we are delighted that the confidence Mike gained in the company's potential to succeed encouraged him to take on the role permanently." Reporting to Mr. Dolan will be Dmitry Ivanov, who was recently appointed Chief Marketing Officer and President of Bacardi Global Brands. He will be responsible for Bacardi's worldwide marketing organization and will also sit on Bacardi's Global Leadership Team.

J. WRAY & NEPHEW

J. Wray & Nephew has released the Emperor Wray, an impressive 3-liter bottle of their white Overproof Rum. Probably the largest bottle of its kind made in Jamaica, the Emperor went on sale this month across the island. Cecil Smith, J. Wray & Nephew's Group Brand Manager, said "*As a matter of fact, Wray and Nephew White Overproof Rum is the world's top selling overproof white rum. The Emperor Wray will stand tall over all competition.*"

EASTSIDE DISTILLING

Eastside Distilling, makers of Below Deck Silver Rum, Ginger Rum and Coffee Rum, as well as a number of other spirits, has broken ground on a new 4,000 square foot facility that they hope to have operational in the second quarter of 2015. Currently, the distillery is only 2,500 square feet. The new expansion will make it one of the largest 'craft' distilleries in the Pacific Northwest, offering Eastside plenty of room for continued growth and favorable economies of scale.

ST. AUGUSTINE DISTILLERY COMPANY

The St. Augustine Distillery Company prides itself on making excellent small batch vodkas and gins from local ingredients. Now, distiller Brendan Wheatley has turned his attention to the heirloom sugarcane in the St. Augustine area. This year will mark the first harvest for some of these canes and Brendan intends to use them in their first cane-juice rum. You can keep up with their progress at <http://staugustinedistillery.com/stadco-spirit-society/>.

PRIVATEER INTERNATIONAL

Privateer has recently purchased the adjacent warehouse space in their building, adding 10,000 square feet for a new tasting area, a barrel room, and far more production space. Doubling the work area will now allow them to increase their weekly production to 2,000 bottles. The rest of the new space will be dedicated to retail and an elevated tasting room that overlooks the whole distillery. Privateer is home to Maggie Campbell, one of the most respected craft distillers in the country, known for her passion and commitment to true spirits. Privateer currently makes two types of rum, a Silver Reserve aged about 12 weeks, and a True American Amber Rum that sits in the cask for up to three years. As part of the expansion, Maggie and team will be introducing new products, including a navy strength (around 110 proof) rum called Navy Yard.

CACHACA 51

Three members of the founding family of Companhia Müller de Bebidas, the producers of the Cachaca 51, were killed in a helicopter crash in early January. Marcelo Müller, the 33-year-old grandson of the founder died along with his 31-year-old wife, Lumara Rocha Passos Müller, their two-year-old daughter Georgia, and her nanny. Details of what caused the crash have not been released.

GUY HARVEY RUM

Renowned wildlife artist Guy Harvey is now entering the rum business. He has joined forces with Shaw-Ross International to launch and develop a spiced rum line. He was personally involved with the tastings and final selections of the ingredients for the finished product and has made sure that a portion of the funds generated by the products will be donated to the marine projects that he is passionate about. Distilled in the Caribbean, Guy Harvey Spiced Rum is an amber rum that contains spices and warm flavors of vanilla, nutmeg and cinnamon and will be bottled at 35% ABV.

Romantic

RUM

Cocktails



Nothing says “romance” like champagne and strawberries.
Nothing, that is, until you reach out for the rum bottle!

So why not prepare a couple of Berries in Champagne and Rum
(background photograph, recipe on pg. 31) and sip them while
cuddling with your loved one?



Got Rum?

Cupid's Kiss

1 oz Cruzan Raspberry Rum
1 oz Canadian Club Whisky
Cranberry Juice

Fill highball glass with ice. Add rum and whisky, fill with juice, and stir.

Key to the Heart

(cocktail developed by Al Nelson, head mixologist at the Sunset Pier at Ocean Key Resort in Key West)

In a pint glass filled with ice, add the following:
3/4 oz Mount Gay Rum (or your favorite gold rum)
1/2 oz Peach Schnapps
1/2 of Malibu Coconut Rum
1 oz of Orange Juice
3/4 oz Pineapple Juice
3/4 oz Cranberry Juice
A dash of Angostura Bitters

Shake well until very cold and then strain into a highball or Double Collins glass filled with ice. Top with a splash of great champagne like Veuve Clicquot and garnish with cherry.

The Superior Love Potion

50 ml White Rum
12.5 ml Crème de Cacao
1 Scoop Strawberry Ice Cream (or sorbet)
5 ml Parfait Amour Liqueur
25 ml Lime Juice
25 ml Champagne

Shake all of the ingredients together until the ice cream/sorbet dissolves. Pour the champagne into a flute and then single strain the gelato mix on top. Garnish with a single Maraschino cherry and grated dark chocolate.

Between the Sheets

25 ml White Rum
25 ml Cointreau
25 ml Brandy
25 ml Lemon Juice

Mix all of the ingredients in a shaker, then double strain into a frosted Martini glass.

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Welcome to The Rum University Library. In addition to the material found on our official website, we also periodically publish on "Got Rum?" reviews of books on topics including fermentation, distillation, aging, mixology and many more. You can also find additional valuable material at

www.RumBook.com

This well-written book is a picturesque composition of vintage ads, old bottles and classic recipes from a time when doing the things right was more important than doing them quickly or inexpensively.

The book lies fully flat, thanks to its spiral binding and hard cover, which makes it very convenient as a bar-top companion. I received the revised edition of the book in the mail and within minutes was already devouring its contents. The author, Ted Haigh (aka "Dr. Cocktail") has a very engaging writing style, which makes an already fascinating subject even more irresistible.

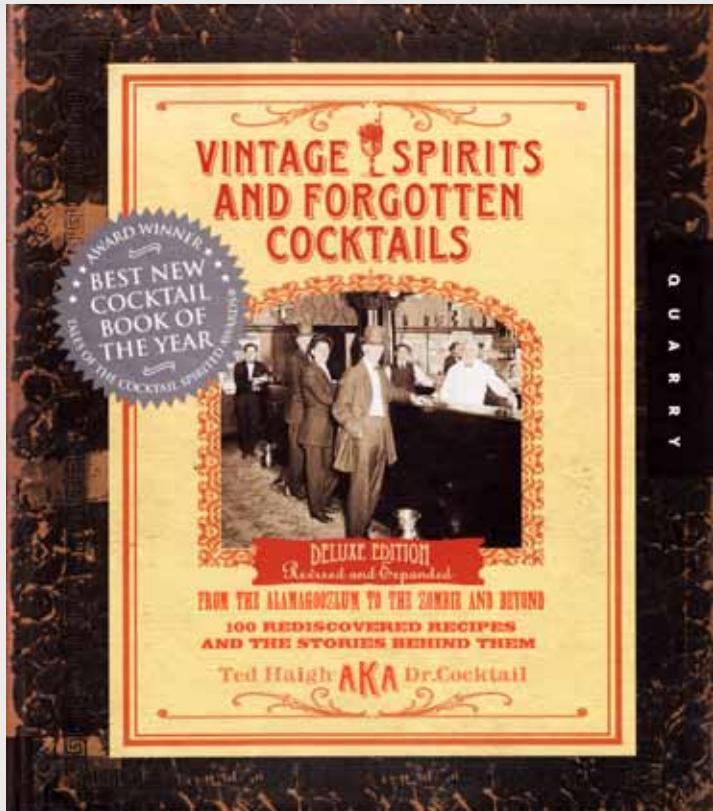
The recipes comprise the lion's share of the book's 350 pages, but before getting to them, the author takes you on a historical journey of "cocktail archaeology", describing in simple-yet-efficient ways, the tumultuous past and the obstacles our drinks have endured and overcome.

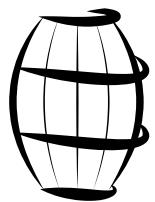
The first recipe is, by many standards, an obscure one: the *Alamagoozum Cocktail*, which incidentally is made with, among many other ingredients, rum. While alphabetical taxonomy may have led to its placement, I also found it to be a good omen, a promise fulfilled, that the book was indeed devoted to vintage and forgotten cocktails. The remainder of the book did not disappoint: there was a new gem at the turn of every page, a once incarcerated muse begging to be liberated.

While many of the obscure recipes will be familiar to anyone who has read Jerry Thomas' Bar-Tender's Guide, seeing them surrounded by imagery from the period (advertisements, glassware, etc.) serves as a time machine, transporting the reader momentarily into the past.

The book is not very strong on rum (its "Resource Guide" at the end even mentions that Guyana is an island!), but it is not supposed to be. This book is the culmination of the relentless dedication and arduous work from the good Doctor and, for this reason, the world of mixology is indebted to him.

Margaret Ayala, Publisher
Margaret@GotRum.com





5-Day Rum Training, February 2-6 2015, Kentucky, USA

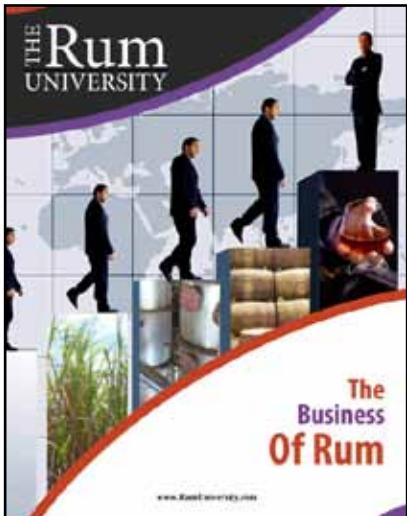


The Rum University and Moonshine University have joined forces to offer the most comprehensive rum training to existing and future rum distillers and brand owners from around the world.

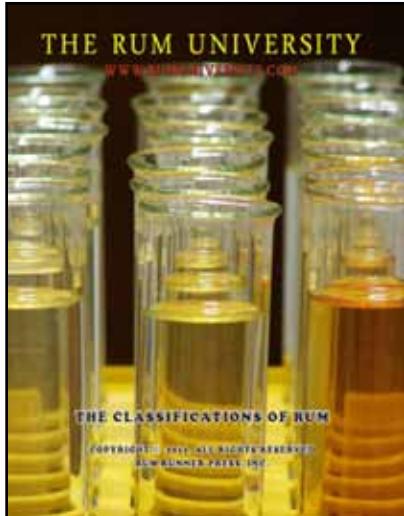
The 5-day course will guide attendees through the financial, marketing, production, aging and blending of rum, so each person can leave with a complete understanding of how rums can fit into the economic landscape. The course will offer a great combination of theory and practice, making it the ideal learning tool for anyone whose livelihood will depend on their ability to properly produce and commercialize excellent rums.



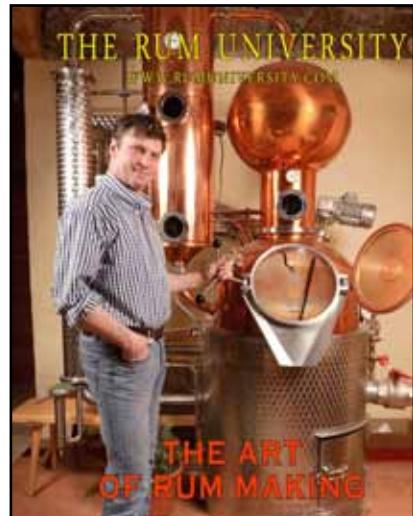
5-Day Course Schedule



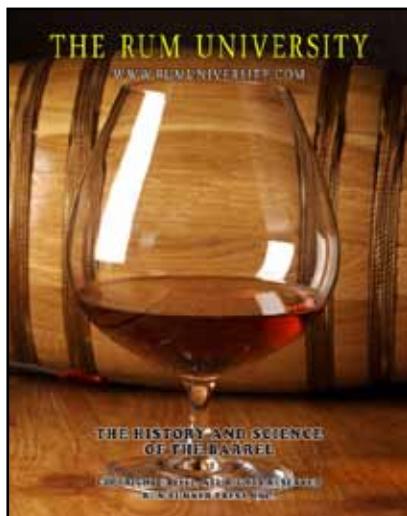
The Business of Rum
(1 Day)



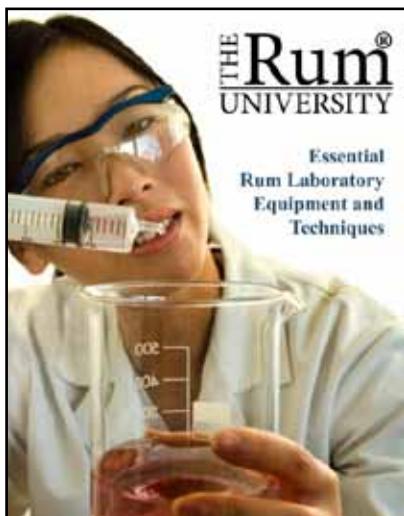
The Classifications of Rum
(1 Day)



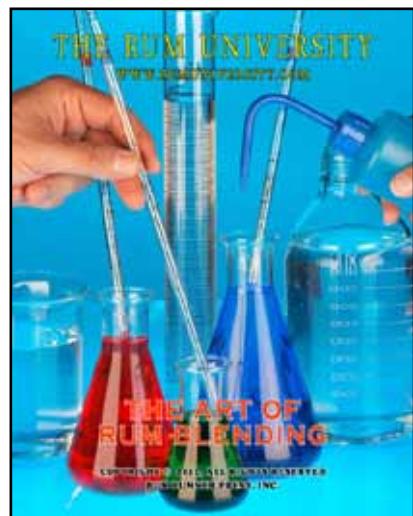
The Art of Rum Making
(1.5 Days)



History and Science
of the Barrel (0.5 Days)



Essential Rum Laboratory
(0.5 Days)



Introduction to Rum
Blending (0.5 Days)

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Rum University courses are available in Spanish and in English, depending on the official language of the host nation.

- m. *Acidum nitricum*
+ Q Acidum Vitrioli
+ Q c. *concentratum, d. dilutum*
+ Θ Acidum Nitri, ~~Q~~ *an. phlogisticatum*
∇ *Aqua fortis*
+ Θ Acidum Salis ~~Q~~ *s. dephlogisticatum*
∇ *Aqua Regis*
+ F Acidum fluoris mineralis
+ Q Acidum Arsenici
+ v. Acidum Vegetabile
+ F Acidum tartari
+ Q Acidum Sacchari
* Acetum
+ a. Acidum animale
+ Q Acidum urinæ phosphori
+ F Acidum formicarum
+ A Acidum aereum; atmosphaericum
⊕ Sal alcalinus
⊕ p. Sal alc. purus (*Causticus*)
⊕ v. Alcali fixum vegetabile
⊕ m. Alcali fixum minerale
⊕ Alcali volatile
∇ Terra
∇ Lapis
∇ Arena
∇ Calx, p. pura (*ustulata*)
∇ ⊕ Calx vitriolata (*seLENites, gipsum*)
∇ Terra ponderosa
∇ Magnesia

making your own
Mamajuana
Rum Aphrodisiac

What is a mamajuana (also known as "Mama Juana")? We get asked this question a lot, apparently many of our readers have been travelling to the Dominican Republic, where they are being exposed to this beverage.

The "mamajuana", or "mama Juana," "damajuana" or "dama Juana" is a beverage native to the Dominican Republic, where it is made by combining rum, wine, honey and ingredients as varied as the people making it and as unique as the needs of the customers requesting it.

We first published information about the mamajuana in May 2002, then in December 2002 and later on the January 2003 issue of "Got Rum?". The questions, however, kept pouring in via email, fax, even by phone! We finally decided to put all the answers we've provided over the past decade into a single article.

Q: Where does the name come from?

A: In order to answer this question we must first introduce a definition.

Demijohn: [DEHM-ee-jon] A large squat bottle with a short narrow neck and usually covered in wicker.

Demijohns can hold from 1 to 10 gallons. The word is thought to be derived from the French "Dame Jeanne" (Lady Jane), a term which is also still used to describe this bottle. In the Spanish-speaking countries, Dame Jeanne was transformed into "Dama Juana" and later, in some places, into "Mama Juana" (mother Jane). So the name "mamajuana" is a derivation of demijohn, which is the name of the container/bottle originally used to prepare and store the maceration.

Q: How is the mamajuana made?

A: The first step is to gather the ingredients, most of the popular ones are listed here, but there are many, many variations which require more or fewer. A popular optional ingredient is the desiccated penis from a sea turtle ("miembro de carey" in Spanish), which is used to enhance the aphrodisiac nature of the drink.

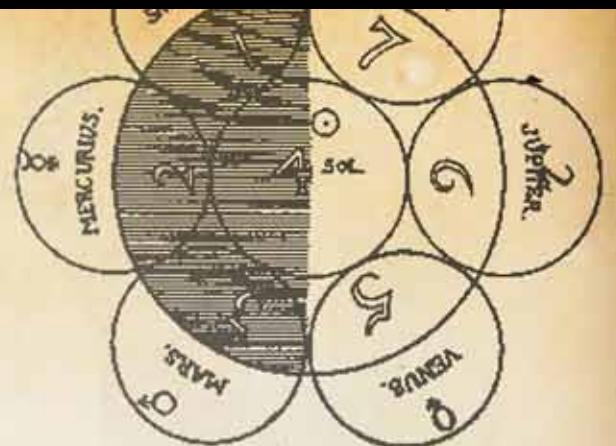
Mamajuana's Most Common Ingredients:

- Albahaca (Basil)
- Anamú (Guinea Henweed)
- Anis Estrellado (Star Anis)
- Bojucó Caro (Princess Vine)
- Bojucó Chino (China Root)
- Bojucó de Palo Indio (Chew Stick)
- Bojucó de Tres Costilla (Basket Wood)
- Canela de Tierra (Cinnamon)
- Clavo (Whole Clove)
- Guauci (Minnie Root)
- Hoja de Canelilla (Rose Wood Leaf)
- Juana La Blanca (Button Weed)
- Manzanilla (Chamomile)
- Marabeli, Nigua (Cornutia)
- Osua (Bay Rum Tree)
- Palo Brasil (Brazil Wood)
- Raiz de Coco (Coconut Palm Root) and
- Timacle (West Indian Milkberry)

The process of making the drink involves introducing the ingredients, cut into small pieces, into a large glass bottle, then curing the ingredients by soaking them with cheap wine or rum and a bit of honey for a couple of days (up to a week or two, depending on how fresh or bitter they are), then discarding the liquid and refilling the bottle with better quality rum. Once properly cured, the ingredients stop imparting bitterness into the liquid they are mixed with and start infusing it with more delectable aromas and flavors.

Q: How many times can I re-use the ingredients?

A: Some people suggest that you should not re-use them more than 4-6 times, while others suggest the longer you re-use them the better they get. The answer is entirely up to you. Once you feel you've extracted all the (desirable) taste out of the ingredients, it will be time to start a new batch.



COMPETITIONS

RTF® RUM TASTING

Blind tasting, with a panel of industry experts, rating the best rums in each category.

The contest is open to all rum brands from around the world, subject to the regulations established by the RTF® organizing committee.

CATEGORIES

White Rum (Possible sub-categories based on alcohol content)

Aged Rum (Possible subcategories based on age or alcohol content):

- Less than 2 years
- 2-5 years
- 6 years or more

Spiced or Fruit-flavored Rum (Possible subcategories based on alcohol content, type of fruit or spice, level of sugar)

- Spiced Rum
- Fruit-flavored Rum

Agricultural Rum: It is distinguished by being made from sugarcane juice rather than from molasses and where any type of additive is highly restricted.

- White Rum
- Amber Rum
- Aged Rum

The event organizers reserve the right to merge or divide the categories based on the number and types of rums registered.

PRIZE

GOLD MEDAL

• RTF® CATEGORY AWARD: The product with the highest score in each category.

• RTF® SELECTION AWARD: The product with the highest score among all categories.

As well as the opportunity to be served at affiliated consumer centers for one month.

Includes media coverage in all media channels associated with RTF®.

* Restrictions may apply



RTF® ON-PREMISE AFFILIATES

RUM TRADE FESTIVAL® is the first festival to create a program for the on-premise accounts. This RTF® program affiliates more than 100 on-premise establishments in several cities, and in which the winners of RTF® Rum Tasting Award, the RTF® Perfect Cocktail Award and RTF® Perfect Mojito Award, will have the opportunity to be present on the menu of these establishments for one month. This is the first time an award includes a business opportunity for the winning brands, which we are sure is an important business goal for all of them.

3 Units	3 Units	18 Units	1 Unit	1 Unit	1 Unit
8 Units	Tulum	4 Units	16 Units	1 Unit	1 Unit
1 Unit	1 Unit	Tulum	3 Units	1 Unit	

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**People who drink
to drown their sorrow
should be told
that sorrow
knows how to swim.**

~Ann Landers

Got Rum?™

Got Rum?™

Bartender's Corner

by Dr. Ron A. Ñejo

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.

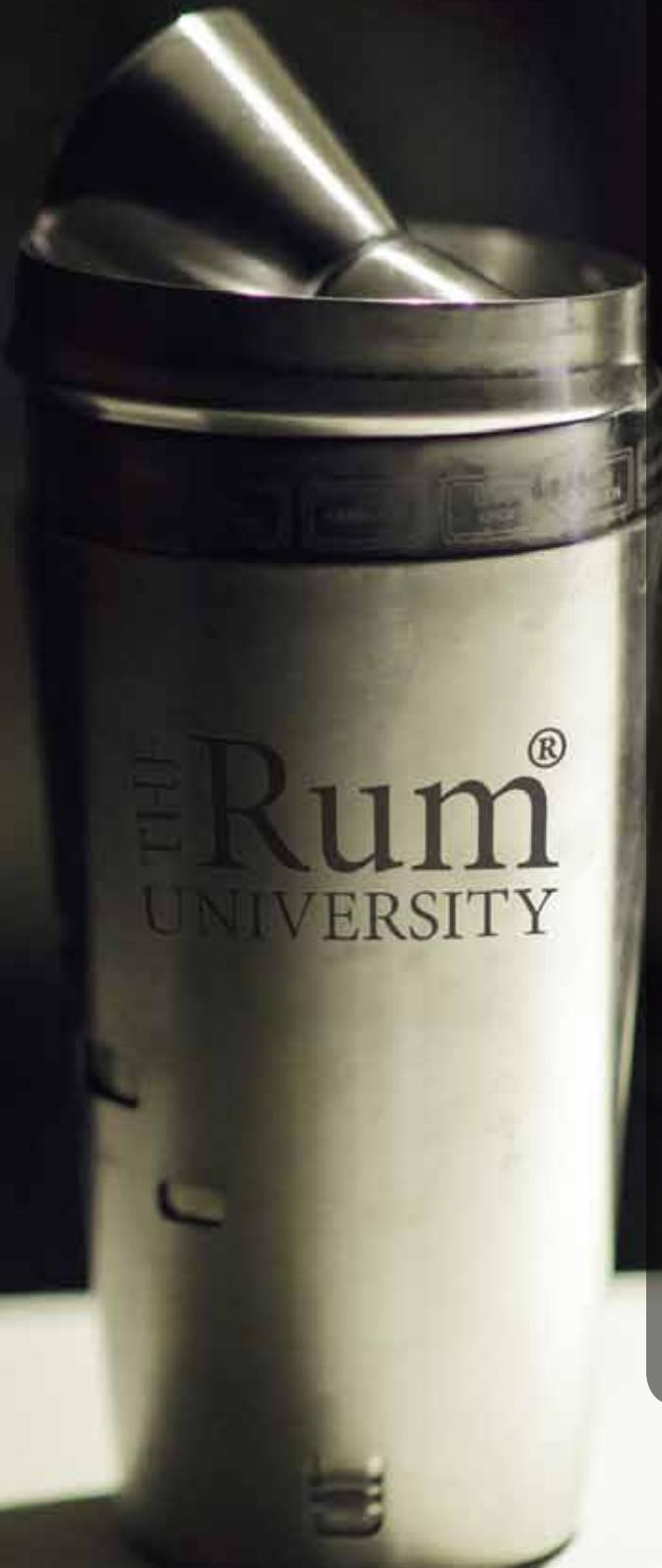
-Dr. Ron A. Ñejo



The Compendium of Bar Measurements and Terms, Part 2

Small Measurements

- **Dash:** for most drink recipes, a dash means 1/8 teaspoon; two dashes will thus fill a 1/4 teaspoon measure. Theoretically, a dash is the amount of liquid that squirts out of a bottle equipped with a dash stopper. Stoppers, however, vary in size, and to different liquor dispensers a dash means anything from three drops up. Dashes are meant to be small, because the liquid in question have strong flavors, so it is very important to be as accurate as possible. For example, if you are making Rum Punch for 16 people and you need 16 dashes of bitters, a little calculation will quickly tell you that you need two teaspoons of bitters, which is easier and more accurately measured by the teaspoon than by the dash.
- **Teaspoon:** 1/3 tablespoon, or 1/6 ounce. Use a measuring teaspoon, not a long-handled barspoon, which is designed for mixing rather than for measuring.
- **Tablespoon:** 3 teaspoons or 1/2 ounce.
- **Pony:** 1 ounce, or the small end of a double-ended measuring jigger. Also the usual capacity of the liqueur glass or the pousse-café glass.
- **Gill:** 4 ounces.
- **Jigger:** 1 1/2 ounces. Also called a bar-measuring glass, it's the standard measure for mixing individual drinks, though generous hosts use a 2-ounce jigger. Although



jiggers are supposed to provide exact measurements, they're sometimes grossly inaccurate, so it's a good idea, if possible, to check any new jigger you buy with a lab measuring glass.

- **Wineglass:** used as a measuring term, it means 4 ounces, which is the old-fashioned wineglass filled to the brim. Though today wine is generally served in a much larger glass, "wineglass" as a 4-ounce measure still appears in some drink and food recipes.
- **Split or Nip:** 6 to 8 ounces. Eight ounces is 1/2 pint, or the contents of a standard measuring cup. One refers to a split of champagne, but the same quantity of stout beer is called a nip.
- **Pint:** 16 ounces; 1/2 quart; 2 standard measuring cups. Many bottles listed on bar menus as a pint of champagne or a pint of wine are actually half of a fifth, or 11 to 13 ounces.
- **Fifth:** 25.6 ounces; 4/5 quart; 1/5 gallon.
- **Quart:** 32 ounces; 2 pints; 4 measuring cups; 1/4 gallon.

Large Measurements

- **Balthazar:** 416 ounces; about 3 1/3 gallons.
- **Demijohn:** from 1 to 10 gallons.
- **Half Gallon:** 64 ounces.
- **Jeroboam:** 104 ounces.
- **Magnum:** 52 ounces; the double-size champagne bottle.
- **Methuselah:** 208 ounces; about 1 3/5 gallons.
- **Nebuchadnezzar:** 520 ounces; about 4 gallons.
- **Rehoboam:** about 160 ounces, or 1 1/5 gallons.
- **Salmanazar:** 312 ounces; about 2 1/2 gallons.
- **Tappit-hen:** about 77 ounces, or 3 fifths.

Next month: Alcohol Strength

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

The Month of Rum and Romance!

It's February and love is in the air. I have two great recipes that will make your loved one feel extra special this month. What better way to express your love than with strawberries and chocolate! Here are some treats that are sure to make your evening unforgettable.

“The discovery of a new dish does more for the happiness of the human race than the discovery of a star.”

— Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

Chocolate Cream Pots

Ingredients

- 1 6 oz. Package of Semi-sweet Chocolate Bits
- 1 Tbsp. Sugar
- 1 Egg
- 1 tsp. Vanilla Extract
- 1 tsp. Rum, use Dark or Spiced Rum
- $\frac{3}{4}$ C. Milk

Directions:

Place the chocolate, sugar, egg, vanilla and rum in a blender, but don't turn it on yet. Heat the milk in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Pour milk immediately into the blender, cover and blend at high speed for one minute. Pour the creamy mixture into six small custard cups (or small glasses) and chill in the refrigerator for at least two hours. Top with whipped cream and add sprinkles (optional).



Berries in Champagne & Rum

Ingredients:

- Strawberries
- Dry Champagne
- Rum

Directions:

Fill a tulip champagne glass with five or six medium-size strawberries. Pour dry champagne into the glass to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the top, then add two tablespoons of rum and chill for 30 minutes in the refrigerator. You and your loved one can enjoy the berries with a spoon and then feel free to drink from the glass when the berries are gone!

Don't despair if you don't have time to hit the market or if you don't find fresh strawberries. This recipe can also be prepared in Martini glass with a maraschino cherry instead of the Strawberries (see photo on page 17).

THE RUM HISTORIAN

by Marco Pierini



My name is Marco Pierini. I own and run a small tourist business in my seaside town in Tuscany, Italy. With my partner Francesco Rufini we founded La Casa del Rum (The House of Rum) that runs a beach bar, distributes Premium Rums and organizes rum seminars and events.

Many years 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 and through History I have always tried to know the world, and men.

Then, I discovered rum and I decided to make a profession of it. I realized Rum has a long, terrible and fascinating history, made of planters and slaves, sailors and pirates, imperial fleets and revolutions. Yet, a History still largely unknown. So I decided to join my lifelong passion, History, to my current job, rum, by writing about the History of Rum.

And here I am.

Marco Pierini
Marco@gotrum.com

GROG

In April 1731, at sea, probably not far from La Havana, a Spanish coast guard stopped and boarded a British brig, *Rebecca*, under suspicion of smuggling. What happened next is not clear, but seven years later, in 1738, the *Rebecca*'s Captain Robert Jenkins exhibited to a committee of the House of Commons his own left ear, cut off by the Spanish that – he said – also pillaged the ship and insulted the British King. British public opinion was already angry with Spain for other "outrages" on British ships and war began in October 1739, later called "War of Jenkins' Ear".

A large fleet sailed to the West Indies under the command of Vice-Admiral Edward Vernon, a great Captain that showed his professional qualities, and his humanity, with the quick conquest of the important town Porto Bello.

In the West Indies, the daily distribution of rum as alternative to beer was normal. But usually sailors drank the spirit pure, in one gulp, a dangerous practice indeed, the cause of many accidents in the rigging at sea and also of many problems of discipline.

Vernon consulted the captains and the surgeons of his fleet, then on August 21, 1740, signed a General Order that deserves to be widely quoted:



Robert Jenkins shows his severed ear to British Prime Minister Robert Walpole in a 1733 depiction of his presentation at Parliament

"Whereas it manifestly appears ... to be the unanimous opinion of both Captains and Surgeons, that the pernicious custom of the seamen drinking their allowance of rum in drams, and often at once, is attended with many fatal effects to their morals as well to their health, which are visibly impaired thereby, and many of their lives shortened by it, besides the ill consequences arising from stupefying their rational qualities, which makes them heedlessly slaves to every passion; [I order the Captains]

... to take particular care that rum be no more served in specie to any of the ship's company under your command, but the respective daily allowance of half a pint a man for all your officers and ship's company, be every day mixed with the proportion of a quart of water to every half pint of rum, to be mixed in scuttled butt kept for that purpose, and to be done upon deck, and in the presence of the Lieutenant of the Watch, who is to take particular care to see that the men are not defrauded in having their full allowance of rum, and when so mixed it is to be served to them in two servings in the day, the one between the hours of 10 and 12 in the morning, and the other between 4 and 6 in the afternoon."

"a quart" was the fourth part of a gallon, roughly 1 liter, so the new beverages had roughly 1 part of rum for 4 parts of water. At first, the seamen did not like the new system, but it spread quickly all over the Royal Navy and they had to accept it. Drunkenness did not disappear on the ships, but it decreased significantly.

Edward Vernon's General Order was the beginning of one of the most impressive, strong, typical, and frankly astounding, rituals of the Royal Navy that lasted for more than 200 years, but we will write about it in future articles.

The new drink had no name, but with their traditional flair for names, the sailors soon gave it one. Vernon's nickname was "Old Grogram" by a waterproof cloak he usually wore.

So his drink was called "Grog".

2014 Rum Journey Rum Cruise

Part 2

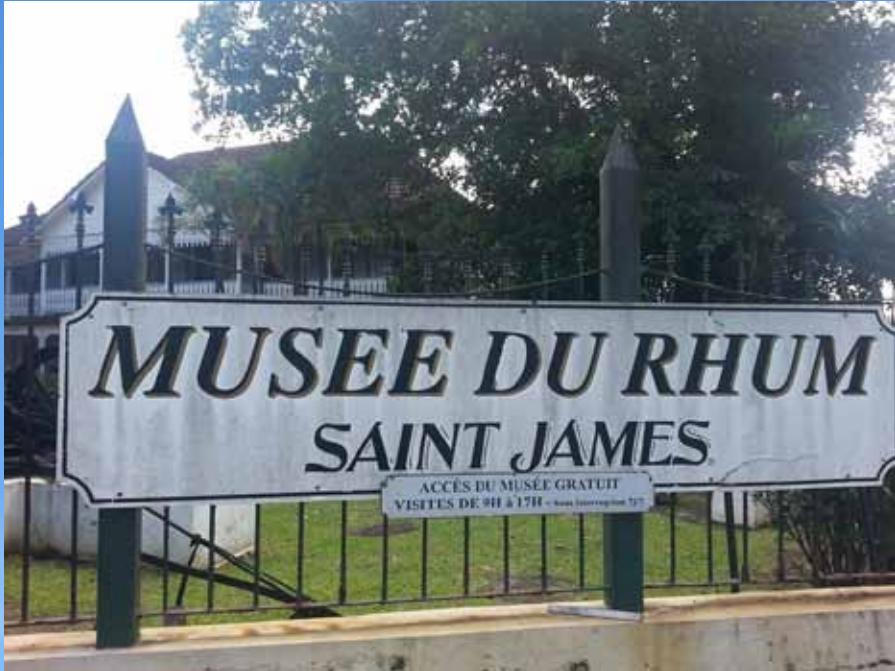
by Paul Senft

The third day of the Rum Journey Rum Cruise aboard the Carnival Splendor brought us to the Island of Martinique. Settled in 1635, Martinique is one of the largest islands of the Lesser Antilles measuring 62 miles x 32 miles (100 Km x 37 Km). Our port of call, Martinique's capital, the city of Fort-de-France is home to roughly 1/4 of the island's 400,000 occupants.

As we approached, our cabin view was on the starboard side of the ship providing us a gorgeous view of a fort where we could see the French flag flying proudly. We departed the ship at Pointe Simon and received our first full view of the city Fort-De-France. The first thing that grabbed my attention was an apartment tower that has to be one of the tallest buildings I have ever seen on a Caribbean island. The weather was overcast and as our group gathered for our tour it started to lightly rain. Leaving the dock we were roughly herded through a quick maze of fences and boundaries until we were ordered to our tour bus. Fort-de-France had none of the welcoming friendliness that we had encountered on other islands. For an island that is seeing more cruise and tourist traffic every year, I expected a better first impression.

Once on the bus we swiftly departed the dreary city to be met by a rolling landscape blanketed by fields of sugarcane and bananas. It was not long and we began to spot sugar plantation ruins and rhum distilleries. Part of the fun was spotting the different distilleries or regions that I have read and written about over the years. As we traveled further north the architecture switched from the structures of a busy city to the colorful buildings commonly seen on many other islands. After an hour long drive we arrived at our first destination; The Rhum St. James Museum de Rhum. I was excited as this and Rhum Clément were the top two





recommended places to visit for a day excursion. They provided the tour in French and a translator explained the agricole rhum process to us as well as the history of the distillery. Then we were allowed to explore the grounds, tour the museum, taste a variety of samples at the gift shop and watch the workers bottle product at the distillery. At the back of the property we discovered a two story building filled with one of

the nicest collections of copper stills we have ever seen. After everyone made their purchases we loaded up and continued our journey north.

Our next stop was in the town of Morne for lunch at the restaurant La Bambou. This should have been an uneventful part of the trip. However, we hit construction on one of the roads and were detoured up a side road. The next half hour was spent winding up and down hills and when our driver realized a suspension bridge would not accommodate our bus, he skillfully descended a half mile down a curving hillside backwards. We finally reached our destination, with a mix of humor and relief. The food was French Creole and a fine introduction to the cuisine of the island. Salad, curry chicken, breadfruit, bananas, several wines, and a dessert of tasty ice cream or banana foster to round things out. After we finished dining we departed for our final stop of the day: The town of Saint Pierre.

Saint Pierre is considered to be the most tragic place on Martinique. In 1902 Saint Pierre was a thriving port city of 30,000 people known as the Paris of the West Indies. On May 8th, 1902, Mount Pele erupted, unleashing a poisonous cloud of volcanic ash down upon the city. In two minutes the entire population of the city perished with the exception of one man sleeping it off in an underground jail cell.

Today Saint Pierre is a small picturesque sea side town. Mount Pele slumbers above while the residents go about their daily business. Our group visited the Mount Pele volcano museum which detailed the history and displayed relics from the eruption. Particularly telling was one of the old church bells melted and warped by the disaster. After the museum we wandered part of the town, shopped the street vendors and our guide took us over to some of the ruins of the original city. After an hour, we returned to our bus for the last time and headed back to Fort-de-France. An hour later we arrived back at the Splendor as the sun began to set. We boarded the ship and after a short time departed for our next island.



At dinner that night we learned that others in our group, who just visited Fort-de-France, found the island disappointing. It was challenging to be able to visit any of the beaches as there were no assurances they could get back to the ship on time. Most saw a couple of landmarks, shopped, and returned to the ship overall disappointed with their experience.

Wednesday morning we awoke as the ship approached the island of Grenada. The island is 21 x 12 miles (34 Km x 19 Km) with a population of around 100,000 people. Discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1498, the island changed flags three times between the Spanish, French and the British for the next 400+ years. They gained their independence in 1974, experienced a coup by leftist forces aligned with Cuba and the Soviet Union in 1979. The coup was overthrown by American forces, returning the island's independence.

Grenada is known as the "Spice Isle of the Caribbean" and is one of the world's top producers of nutmeg and mace. The island also produces cocoa, cinnamon, ginger and clove. The tourist industry is regulated to preserve the environment. Most hotels and resorts are in the St. George's or Grand Anse Beach area in the southeast corner of the





island. I had visited the island in 2013 and it left quite a positive impression on me. I was excited to share the island with the group and could not wait to get started.

Our ship arrived at the Melville Street Cruise Terminal in St. George's. We were greeted by the music of a steel drum band and guided to our bus. Visitors to the island exit through the Esplanade shopping mall where they can get a taxi or walk up the hill to the Spice market or the French built Fort George. There is so much to do and see in Grenada that we chose to have a relaxing day of rum and beach time.

We loaded our bus and departed for our first destination of the day: The Clarke's Court Rum Distillery. A quick ride later we were issued our hard hats and took a tour of the fully operational distillery. First, we viewed the old sugar refinery equipment that is on display to explain the history of the island and distillery. The tour continued into the distillery where we witnessed the molasses fermenting, distillation tanks, barreling and bottling areas. Our tour

concluded in the tasting room, where we had a huge selection of products to sample and purchase. Clarke's Court products have limited distribution in the United States so everyone in the group took the opportunity to purchase a few bottles for their home bars.

We boarded the bus for our final stop - Morne Rouge Beach. It did not take us long and we were at the gorgeous white sand beach. We spent the rest of the time swimming and relaxing in the sun. There was a beach bar on location where we all enjoyed some Carib beer as we relaxed the day away. All too soon we were back on the bus heading back to St. George's. I was happy to discover that the Esplanade shopping mall had excellent duty free rum opportunities and a nice variety of products produced by the residents of Grenada. We reluctantly returned to the ship and promised that the next time we visited we would make sure it was for a much longer stay. That night we prepared to visit our last rum producing island of the voyage: the island of Dominica.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

by Margaret Ayala

ARTISAN SPIRIT

Brian Christensen, Editor and Publisher

It gives me great pleasure to share this interview with all our "Got Rum?" readers, as both Luis and I admire Brian Christensen's passion for the craft spirits industry.

We've had the pleasure of knowing Brian for many years and always look forward to the opportunity to sit down with him and exchange thoughts/insights about the industry.

As a result of his work for Artisan Spirit Magazine, Brian is intimately aware of all the players and trends in this industry. I am thankful to him for taking the time to grant us this interview.

Margaret Ayala,
Publisher



Artisan Spirit Magazine offers its readers a much needed window into the world of craft spirits. Can you tell us how the idea of the magazine came together and what its core mission is?

Like many startups, we began as one thing and pivoted to something else. More than once in our case. We contemplated everything from online education to opening our own distillery. As we looked into what that would entail, we found ourselves thirsting for knowledge. In the end, we decided to put our varied talents to use and become the resource that we were so desperately craving. It's strange to think that just two years ago we had zero experience in distilling or publishing. The thing we did have, was the same thing that now drives our business; a voracious hunger to learn and a passion to share stories. That's what Artisan Spirit Magazine's core mission is: to share and celebrate the art and science of craft distilling. We seek to support

creativity, innovation, and integrity within this industry that we love so much. We've built a business around being curious and a willing to risk asking stupid questions.

There is much talk these days about what "craft" is and is not. In my opinion, "craft" is nothing more than what "business as usual" was a hundred years ago. Back then many small producers had their own pot stills and individual recipes and traditions. Can you give us your opinion?

We've dedicated a lot of copy to this subject ourselves, and touched on many different perspectives. However, in the end, there are two things that inform my perspective on the issue. The first is probably the most important, "are you being honest?" When someone tells their story on a label, or in person I just want to know that it's true. It doesn't matter to me if you make your spirit out of a garage or source it from Indiana. Just be sure to explain your process on the label so the consumer can decide what that means to them. The second is just based on our personal opinion: we love small business. Usually when a consumer thinks of something being "craft" they are envisioning that ideal romantic small business. Operating with passion, creativity, and determination. Those qualities are by no means limited to small businesses, but that's what sparks our imagination. So we focus on those stories, and strive to meet the needs of that part of the "craft" market.

Do you think "craft" will ever lose its "newness" and become once again, the "normal" spirit?

Newness yes, normal no. The spirits industry doesn't have the ability to see perfectly into the future, but we may have the next best thing, the craft beer industry. By most accounts craft beer is 10-15 years ahead of the craft spirits industry. Now the comparison isn't perfect. Spirits are more heavily regulated than beer, and consumers tend to go through a six pack of beer much faster than a bottle of spirits. Still, we can learn a lot from craft beer and what that industry has developed into. Craft beer has gone from being "new" to something synonymous with creativity, and in most cases quality. Craft distilling has the opportunity to do the same.

One of the things that makes "craft" wonderful is the ability of the people behind the movement to be original, to express their commitment to different aspects of quality or production. By the same token, this liberty allows for some people to do things that can ultimately hurt the image of craft. Do you believe a happy medium can be reached or are we looking at an industry that has to remain un-regulated to a large extent?

Creativity is one of the great driving forces behind craft distilling, and the freer businesses are to innovate the better off the industry is. However, we do have to acknowledge that "craft" doesn't automatically mean the product is good. There are, and will continue to be, poor quality craft offerings. This means that some consumers will have a bad experience and possibly be turned off to the craft market. But I don't think that's a strong enough case to make for over-regulation, which could stifle innovation. I give a lot of credit to consumers who have shown themselves to be far more curious and experimental than they used to be. I don't see that changing anytime soon.

Based on your observations of craft spirits in the USA, are all spirit categories (whiskey, vodka, gin, rum, etc.) growing at the same rate or are there some that are growing at a much healthier rate than others?

Brown spirits are king. Aged products, particularly whisky and bourbon, are growing at a much faster rate compared than other products. This is reflected nationally and internationally, with foreign demand reaching impressive levels. In 2013 bourbon and whiskey exports broke the \$1 billion threshold for the first time.

I've often said that in the USA, the Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) is in charge of collecting alcohol taxes and enforcing alcohol quality, and that this is a built-in conflict of interest. What are your thoughts on this topic?

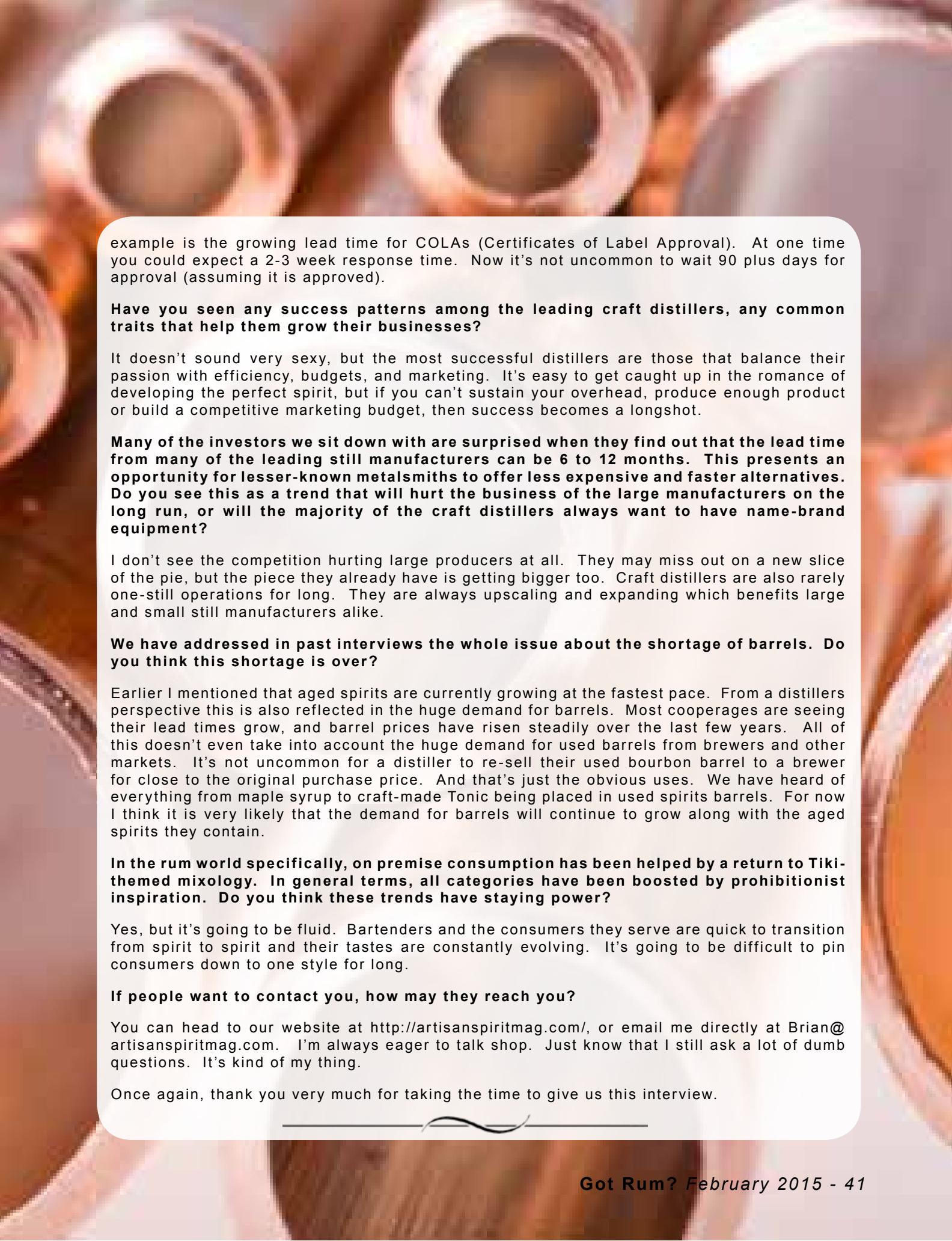
I think the former definitely tends to take precedent, but that's the nature of government. The bigger short term problem is the issue of TTB's limited resources. The distilling industry is growing faster than the government funding for the organization tasked with its oversight. It might be surprising to hear, but most craft distillers I've spoken with have a relatively good relationship with the TTB, and TTB agents are usually very helpful. However, there simply isn't enough of them. One practical

WINTER 2014

ARTISAN SPIRIT

THE MAGAZINE FOR CRAFT DISTILLERS AND THEIR FANS





example is the growing lead time for COLAs (Certificates of Label Approval). At one time you could expect a 2-3 week response time. Now it's not uncommon to wait 90 plus days for approval (assuming it is approved).

Have you seen any success patterns among the leading craft distillers, any common traits that help them grow their businesses?

It doesn't sound very sexy, but the most successful distillers are those that balance their passion with efficiency, budgets, and marketing. It's easy to get caught up in the romance of developing the perfect spirit, but if you can't sustain your overhead, produce enough product or build a competitive marketing budget, then success becomes a longshot.

Many of the investors we sit down with are surprised when they find out that the lead time from many of the leading still manufacturers can be 6 to 12 months. This presents an opportunity for lesser-known metalsmiths to offer less expensive and faster alternatives. Do you see this as a trend that will hurt the business of the large manufacturers on the long run, or will the majority of the craft distillers always want to have name-brand equipment?

I don't see the competition hurting large producers at all. They may miss out on a new slice of the pie, but the piece they already have is getting bigger too. Craft distillers are also rarely one-still operations for long. They are always upscaling and expanding which benefits large and small still manufacturers alike.

We have addressed in past interviews the whole issue about the shortage of barrels. Do you think this shortage is over?

Earlier I mentioned that aged spirits are currently growing at the fastest pace. From a distillers perspective this is also reflected in the huge demand for barrels. Most cooperages are seeing their lead times grow, and barrel prices have risen steadily over the last few years. All of this doesn't even take into account the huge demand for used barrels from brewers and other markets. It's not uncommon for a distiller to re-sell their used bourbon barrel to a brewer for close to the original purchase price. And that's just the obvious uses. We have heard of everything from maple syrup to craft-made Tonic being placed in used spirits barrels. For now I think it is very likely that the demand for barrels will continue to grow along with the aged spirits they contain.

In the rum world specifically, on premise consumption has been helped by a return to Tiki-themed mixology. In general terms, all categories have been boosted by prohibitionist inspiration. Do you think these trends have staying power?

Yes, but it's going to be fluid. Bartenders and the consumers they serve are quick to transition from spirit to spirit and their tastes are constantly evolving. It's going to be difficult to pin consumers down to one style for long.

If people want to contact you, how may they reach you?

You can head to our website at <http://artisanspiritmag.com/>, or email me directly at Brian@artisanspiritmag.com. I'm always eager to talk shop. Just know that I still ask a lot of dumb questions. It's kind of my thing.

Once again, thank you very much for taking the time to give us this interview.

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CIGAR & RUM PAIRING

by Philip Ili Barake



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

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

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

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

Cuba

This month's article, rather than being a pairing, is a series of guidelines for those Americans interested in travelling to Cuba for the first time. I'm going to share some tips about the cigars and a few morsels of travel wisdom.

Upon your arrival in Cuba, everything you see will be something new (to you), starting with the airport. If you already made plans with your hotel, a representative will be there waiting for you. If you still haven't booked a hotel, there are a couple that I will recommend in "Habana Vieja" ("Old Havana"). I really like one from the Iberostar chain, named Hotel Parque Central a few steps away from the Capitol. You will also find the Spanish-inspired Meliá hotels: the Meliá Habana is a bit away from the downtown area and the Meliá Cohiba, a few minutes from downtown and, of course, the "malecón." There are other historic hotels, such as Hotel Habana Libre, which are almost museums, filled with photographs from the revolution. Finally, there is Hotel Nacional which is covered in history but also has a great view.

Setting aside my gig as a travel agent (I'll expect a commission next time I travel to Havana!), don't forget to try the "Paladares", which are traditional Cuban food restaurants, cooked at home by the owners of the establishments. These are very trendy ways to savor authentic and freshly-made gourmet meals.

Time now to focus on the core of our interest. More than likely, anyone travelling to Cuba is passionate about rum and cigars. Some of the rums that you can still find in Cuba include Ron Santiago de Cuba 11 Años, as well as the rums from the Caney line, all these from the eastern part of the island, from Santiago.

As far as cigars, there are a few factories you can visit and hopefully they won't be closed for restoration when you show up. Among them is the Partagas tobacco factory on Amistad Street, number 405, very close to the Hotel Parque Central. Another factory you can visit is H. Umpann, located on Belascoín Street, number 853, between Peñalver and Desagüe streets.

The cigars or "Habanos", mostly hand-rolled, with leaves coming from the best tobacco growing regions in Cuba, especially from the western zone of the island, from the Pinar del Rio province. This province is a magical place, where time seems to have stood still, with scenes reminiscent of those from dinosaur movies. The mineral-rich soils are the home of the "Vegas Finas de Primera", the elite tobacco plantations. These plains are silent witnesses to the growth of the different tobacco plants, which after careful patient maturing, are rolled by craftsmen from the different factories around the island.

Witnessing with your own eyes the myth and legend of the lands from where the famous Cuban tobacco comes is a beautiful thing. But beware, there is a high probability that you'll find counterfeit Cuban cigars both inside and outside the country. More than likely, if you decide to take a stroll through the old Havana, you'll attract the attention of someone who'll offer to sell you Cohiba cigars "just like the ones Fidel used to smoke." They will all claim to have the real thing...





I once played the role of a tourist looking for cigars and in no time there was a Cuban guy offering to sell me a box of Cohiba for \$60 dollars. The price was the first indication that something was wrong. I asked him if I could take a picture of the cigars (facing page). At first sight, they appear to be real, but there are flaws that either the counterfeiters are not aware of, or they don't bother fixing them because they don't have to (it is very easy to sell them to ignorant tourists).

So here is a list of things to keep in mind when examining a box of cigars:

- Price: too good of a price is often a bad sign. In my case, the Cuban vendor even offered to lower the price to \$40 dollars for the box.
- Seals: in this case, the seals were loose, on top of the cigars. It would be very strange for the Cohiba factory (El Laguito) to produce the box and not attach the seals.
- Part of the boxing process for cigars involves selecting them based on wrapper quality and wrapper color. As you can see from the picture, the quality of the wrappers is low and colors are not uniform and many of the leaves have very pronounced veins.
- Another aspect you can use to verify the cigars is the seals that are applied at the bottom of the box, sometimes heat-branded, usually "Habanos SA – Hecho en Cuba – Totalmente a Mano" (if made totally by hand) and a stamp with the month and year of manufacture and a few additional letters that resemble codes. Knowledgeable people from the industry can decipher those codes and ascertain from them the factory where the cigars were rolled.

Why, you may be asking yourself, would it be important for a Cohiba cigar to indicate which factory it was produced at, when it should have been produced by Cohiba's own factory?



Fake Espléndidos. Photo: @Cigarlli

The truth is that cigar factories tend to be format/shape specialists (which can take many years for a cigar roller to become proficient), rather than brand-specific factories. For example, a pyramid selection box, which contains 5 pyramid cigars from different brands, is always rolled and assembled at the H. Upmann factory. These codes, therefore, ensures that consumers are actually getting what they are paying for, even if the superficial impression is that they are buying one brand that is made by another one.

Even with all these clues, if we still have any doubts, the best way to find out if you have the real thing is to light one up. The counterfeit ones, made with tobaccos that are not from the Vegas Finas, the cigar will be drier, without any of the typical aromas associated with the brand, sometimes very earthy and spicy. Often times the cigars are not properly stored, but other times you may be pleasantly surprised from them too!

My advice is for you to go to different Casas del Habano, be aware of the different options available. You don't need to start with a Cohiba, there are many other fantastic brands. Enjoy your trip, you'll soon find out that you can't judge a book by its cover; Cuba is a fantastic country and Cuban people are very kind and you may develop life-long friendships with them.

Cheers,
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EL SALVADOR'S FIRST RUM