

G R O S S E R

MITTEL  
AMERICA

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WESTINDIEN OCEAN

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# The STRONG WATER STORY

Here's a tale, if told right, spins forth these words, the story of rum is the story of the New World. At *Loews Sapphire Falls Resort*, where the palm trees sway, the steel drums play and you're never too far from the Caribbean, *Strong Water Tavern* is here to bring you along on the voyage of rum - from its origins to its role in North American history, from the age of exploration to the drink you hold in your hand. It's a long yarn but one full of adventure and told best by taste under the capable stewardship of one of our rum captains. *But until then...*

The story begins with a blade of grass from the *Saccharum officinarum* plant, better known to most of us as *sugar cane*. Europeans happened upon this sweet plant while campaigning through Asia and the Middle East during the medieval era. They returned home with the plant but quickly discovered it could not be grown in European climates, so sugar cane became a rare delicacy that was used not just in sweets but also as a food preservative and as medicine.

## THE AGE of EXPLORATION

Not long after their discovery by European explorers, the warm and moist islands of the Caribbean were cultivated to grow Old World discoveries from Asia such as cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice, but most of all, sugar. Indeed, the first sugar plant brought to the New World was in the hold of one of Christopher Columbus' ships. The Spanish, followed by the British, Dutch and French, set up colonies for the exportation of sugar back to the growing cities of Europe.

When sugar cane is harvested, it must be cooked to extract table sugar. What's left over is *molasses*. The thick tarry-like substance was considered a waste product at first, until it was discovered that it ferments easily in warmer climates. It was only a matter of time before some entrepreneurial planter, remembering perhaps the gin or brandy of his homeland, built a copper pot still and began to produce *Strong Water*.

Historical records seem to indicate that the English were the first distillers of the spirit, on the island of Barbados, initially calling it *kill-devil*. Whoever was first, every island where sugar was produced began to distill barrels of rum. Hard alcohol was a necessary food product for long ocean



Fig. 1 Sugar Cane

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voyages of the time. It was good for sterilizing drinking water and for settling the stomach, as well as making long hot days before the mast easier to bear. Plus, it was cheaper to produce than the brandies and whiskies made in Europe. Stored in barrels on these ships, the fiery liquid would mellow in flavor during the long transatlantic journeys between the new and old worlds. Even today, the rums of the English colonies like *Mount Gay* from Barbados, *Appleton* of Jamaica and *El Dorado* seem rich with raw hearty molasses flavor.

Over time, to improve its reputation and perceived quality, *kill-devil* came to be known as *rum* by the English, *ron* by the Spanish or *rhum* by the French. As with many stories about alcohol, the origin of this word is unclear, though it might have come from the Latin word for sugar cane or from the English slang for bar fight, rumbullion. Given the quality of the spirits at the time it's not hard to see the connection.

No matter. Over the next hundred years rum's popularity rose and its consumption spread across the globe, especially in North America. It became part of standard rations in the British Royal Navy, with Admiral Edward Vernon going so far as decreeing its consumption in small doses diluted with water and lime. The drink came to be known as "*Old Grog*," Vernon's nickname, and is more or less the forebearer of almost all rum cocktails any of us have ever enjoyed.

## COLONIAL AMERICA

And of ancestors to cocktails, we arrive now on mainland North America, when these United States were still British colonies. Prior to the American Revolution, "the" drink was rum-based punches that were serious affairs of spirit, sugar, water, citrus and perhaps a little spice. Every self-respecting tavern had its own secret recipe and every self-respecting town had at least one good tavern. The founders of our country loved rum punch. If you see a sign on an old colonial era inn that reads "George Washington slept here," you can bet the owner whipped up a good punch recipe. Then, as now, punches were served up in large communal batches and so from Newfoundland to New Orleans, North Americans were consuming lots of rum.

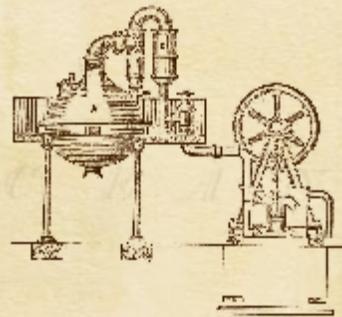


Fig. 2 Sugar Cane Mill

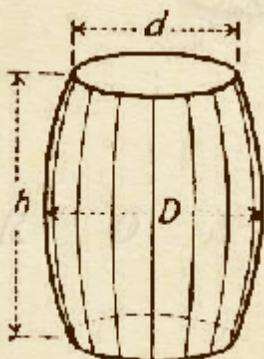
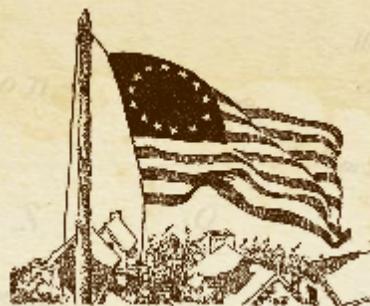
They were producing lots of it too. Over time, while sugar and molasses production obviously remained in the Caribbean, a great deal of the production of rum moved

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north, fuel for rapidly industrializing cities. More rum was produced in New England prior to the American Revolution than anywhere else in the world. So much so that the British Parliament passed a series of taxes on goods delivered to the British American colonies. Those taxes, and the colonists' none too quiet responses to them (*heard of the Boston Tea Party?*), played a role in the British American colonies declaring their independence. You are drinking and dining right now in the United States of America, in no small part, because of rum.

Consumption of rum declined in the United States not long after the American Revolution, as the country expanded westward into the rich farmlands of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. There, grain cultivation spurred the switch to corn- and rye-based spirits like whiskey and gin, and a new wave of central and Eastern European immigrants brought with them a thirst for beer and the know-how for brewing it. Meanwhile, the rest of the world's thirst for rum grew and the web of its production expanded to other continents and islands including Africa, Australia, the South Pacific and Indonesia. Advances in distillation technology, coming mostly out of Europe, improved the quality of the spirit and as distilleries entered their third and fourth generations of ownership, producers began to manage more closely the reputation of their brands. Regional and island styles began to emerge. The French islands, for example, became some of the largest producers of sugar in the early 1800s and are known, even today, for bright aromatic rums distilled directly from sugar cane juice in labels like *Neisson*, *Duquesne* and *Damoiseau*.



## RUM'S REVIVAL

A North American taste for rum began to emerge again in the 20th century. Prohibition pushed the well-heeled drinking tourists abroad, in search of hassle-free cocktails. The new American traveler, both business and tourist, began to explore the Caribbean and Central America, gaining exposure to the food and drink of those regions. Cuba, Haiti and Panama became playgrounds for the wealthy. So, while bootleggers smuggled in whiskey and gin on the northern borders, rum runners plied their trade off the coast of Florida, lurking with barges full of contraband spirit just across international waters. Rum found its great crusader in the grizzled form of Ernest Hemingway, who from his retreat in Cuba, testified to the joys of the daiquiri and the mojito.

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World War II provided a further boost, as domestic distilleries converted to the production of industrial alcohol. Drinkers abhorred the vacuum and so in flooded rum. The first tiki bars sprung up to provide imaginary tropical paradises where mixologists crafted complex and strong drinks, giving rum an attention not paid in previous cocktail epochs.

Another sugar based beverage of American invention also became world renowned during the war: *Coca-Cola*®. Carried on the notes of The Andrews Sisters' cover of the song "*Rum and Coca-Cola*," the Cuba Libre became a popular drink the world over. It was a simple and refreshing alternative to the complex time bombs of tiki culture. But even today it seems as if the Spanish island rums like *Bacardi*, *Brugal* and *Barrilito* have evolved with more of the international cocktail market in mind, emphasizing smoothness and mixability.

The modern cocktail craze has, once again, brought our attention around to this storied spirit. Beginning perhaps with the mojito and its simpler relation, the caipirinha, the appeal of rum has relaunched an expedition to its origin, style and versatility. The quest for new and obscure styles has revived spiced rum and has led to an explosion of small distillery rums, many from right here in *Florida*. We invite you to taste and learn with us, and help continue the voyage of this ever-evolving spirit.

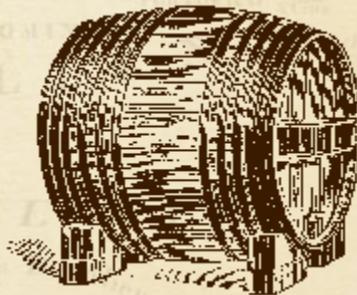
## ENJOYING RUM

We've divided our rum collection into several categories, mostly based on history. Unlike some spirits, like tequila or bourbon, which have a specific origin and laws that define them, each rum producing country gets to define their own.

All rums can be divided into light or dark. The gold to deep brown in dark rums comes from a combination of oak barreled aging and the possible addition of caramel or molasses. The oak barrels, usually used for whiskey or cognac, smooth out the fieriness of the raw spirit and add flavors of vanilla and winter spices. The color and sweetness of any additives also serve to make the spirit more palatable. A light or clear rum could indicate that it was bottled

right off the still, but not necessarily. Many light rums are aged for a few years in neutral (flavorless) oak barrels and then filtered to remove color. Again, this aging serves to smooth out the spirit.

Although this perhaps covers the best known styles and regions of rum, there are constantly appearing new brands and characteristics. If you'd care to wander off of your own map, we invite you to seek the counsel of one of our rum captains, who'd be delighted to recommend something or assemble a flight that suits your mood. The only proper destination is your palate's pleasure.



# SELECTION of SPIRITS

## Spanish Island

BRUGAL AÑEJO, <i>Dominican Republic</i>	12
BRUGAL EXTRA DRY, <i>Dominican Republic</i>	12
BRUGAL VIEJO, <i>Dominican Republic</i>	15
KIRK & SWEENEY 12 YR, <i>Dominican Republic</i>	12
KIRK & SWEENEY 18 YR, <i>Dominican Republic</i>	13
KIRK & SWEENEY 23 YR, <i>Dominican Republic</i>	15
MATUSALEM 15, <i>Dominican Republic</i>	12
MATUSALEM PLATINO, <i>Dominican Republic</i>	9
DON Q 151, <i>Puerto Rico</i>	12
DON Q AÑEJO, <i>Puerto Rico</i>	12
DON Q CRISTAL, <i>Puerto Rico</i>	10
RON DEL BARRILITO 2 STAR, <i>Puerto Rico</i>	10
RON DEL BARRILITO 3 STAR, <i>Puerto Rico</i>	10

## Spiced Flavored Rum

PLANTATION STIGGINS PINEAPPLE, <i>Jamaica</i>	15
RHUM CLÉMENT CREOLE SHRUBB, <i>Martinique</i>	12
KRAKEN, <i>Multi Island</i>	12
SAILOR JERRY, <i>Multi Island</i>	9
KRONAN SWEDISH PUNSCH, <i>Sweden</i>	12
OAK PALM, <i>St. Petersburg, Florida</i>	15

## British Island

COCKSPUR OLD GOLD, <i>Barbados</i>	12
COCKSPUR VSOR, <i>Barbados</i>	15
MOUNT GAY BLACK BARREL, <i>Barbados</i>	10
MOUNT GAY SILVER, <i>Barbados</i>	10
MOUNT GAY XO, <i>Barbados</i>	15
MOUNT GAY 1703, <i>Barbados</i>	30
MOUNT GAY ECLIPSE, <i>Barbados</i>	10
GOSLING'S, <i>Bermuda</i>	12
BLACK TOT, <i>British Royal Navy</i>	125*
Seven FATHOMS, <i>Grand Cayman</i>	13
APPLETON 21, <i>Jamaica</i>	55*
APPLETON VX, <i>Jamaica</i>	12
HAMILTON JAMAICAN BLACK, <i>Jamaica</i>	12
PLANTATION 2001, <i>Jamaica</i>	21
PLANTATION ORIGINAL, <i>Jamaica</i>	12
PLANTATION OVERPROOF, <i>Jamaica</i>	12
PLANTATION WHITE, <i>Jamaica</i>	9
SMITH AND CROSS, <i>Jamaica</i>	12
HAMILTON ST LUCIA POT STILL, <i>St Lucia</i>	12

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## French Island

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DAMOISEAU BLANC, <i>Guadalupe</i>	15
DAMOISEAU VSOP, <i>Guadalupe</i>	16
DAMOISEAU XO, <i>Guadalupe</i>	25
CLÉMENT HOMÈRE, <i>Martinique</i>	30
CLÉMENT VSOP, <i>Martinique</i>	15
DUQUESNE BLANC, <i>Martinique</i>	12
DUQUESNE ÉLEVÉ SOUS BOIS, <i>Martinique</i>	15
JM RHUM BLANC 100, <i>Martinique</i>	15
JM RHUM VIEUX 86, <i>Martinique</i>	15
NEISSON AMBRE, <i>Martinique</i>	16
NEISSON BLANC, <i>Martinique</i>	15
NEISSON RESERVE ESPECIAL, <i>Martinique</i>	25

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## U.S.A. / International

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ST. GEORGE CALI AGRICOLE, <i>California</i>	24
ST. AUGUSTINE, <i>Florida</i>	18
BANKS, <i>Multi Island</i>	12
BANKS 7, <i>Multi Island</i>	15
PAPA'S PILAR BLONDE, <i>Multi Island</i>	10
PAPA'S PILAR DARK, <i>Multi Island</i>	16
DOS MADERAS PX, <i>Spain</i>	18
RAW & UNFILTERED, <i>Key West, Florida</i>	16

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## Mainland

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RON ZACAPA 23, <i>Guatemala</i>	21
EL DORADO 3 WHITE, <i>Guyana</i>	9
EL DORADO 5, <i>Guyana</i>	9
EL DORADO 8, <i>Guyana</i>	12
EL DORADO 12, <i>Guyana</i>	13
HAMILTON 151 OVERPROOF, <i>Guyana</i>	13
FLOR DE CANA 4, <i>Nicaragua</i>	10
FLOR DE CANA 7, <i>Nicaragua</i>	12
FLOR DE CANA 18, <i>Nicaragua</i>	21
ABUELO 7, <i>Panama</i>	12
ABUELO CENTURIA, <i>Panama</i>	55*
CANA BRAVA, <i>Panama</i>	12
CANA BRAVA 7, <i>Panama</i>	15
DIPLOMATICO RESERVA, <i>Venezuela</i>	12
DIPLOMATICO EXCLUSIVA RESERVA, <i>Venezuela</i>	16
DIPLOMATICO 2000, <i>Venezuela</i>	35
DIPLOMATICO AMBASSADOR, <i>Venezuela</i>	75*
SANTA TERESA 1796 SOLERA, <i>Venezuela</i>	18

\* Not included in the rum flight

\*\* We can customize a flight of these rums. MP



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