

THE **Rum** UNIVERSITY

Rum Appreciation In The 21st Century

Lesson II



Lesson II - Exploring the Foundation of all Rum: White Rums

Vocabulary Primer: Rum Terminology

Age, Aging

Aging is one of the most controversial aspects of the production of rum. Today almost all aged rum in the market is matured in oak barrels previously used for aging whiskey or bourbon, although barrels used for cognac and wine are also used. The use of bourbon casks for aging rum is rather recent, since bourbon itself was not aged in charred oak barrels until 1860, 71 years after it first began being distilled in Kentucky in 1789. The aging process is very complicated and, in many cases, is surrounded by charming legends of family traditions dating back centuries. The truth is that during aging, certain naturally occurring physical and chemical changes take place. These changes, referred to as the maturation of the rum, serve to improve the quality of the "marriage" of the distillates stored in the barrels so that they can be better enjoyed as a beverage. During aging, the oxygen from the air goes in through the pores of the barrel to oxidize the alcohols into aldehydes and the aldehydes into acids. As time goes on, the acids react with the alcohols to produce esters. The time required for rum to be properly aged is in direct proportion to its body. Heavy-bodied rums will take longer to age than their lighter counterparts.

Aging Laws

Most rum-producing countries require rum to be aged for at least one year before it is bottled. On the other extreme, many distillers argue that aging a rum for more than eight years is counterproductive. Imagine, for example, the case of Venezuela, where the evaporation rate, due to heat and dryness, is of 10% per year, compared to about 2% in Scotland and France. The age makeup of a given rum is the complex combination of the different ages of the distillates used, which produce the desired organoleptic effect for each particular product. Mount Gay's Master Blender explains: "It is not surprising, therefore, that any attempt to give a definitive declaration of age would be awkward, or conflicting, or impossible, depending on the complexity of the blend and on the expertise of the one who attempts to make such a declaration... Excellence is the end. The age makeup is merely one of the several means we use to accomplish this end." After distillation, rums are about 96% alcohol by volume. At this strength, evaporation would be too rapid, so the rum is always diluted before aging. Different companies will dilute their rums to different strengths. For example, Caroni Limited from Trinidad, ages their rum at about 80% strength, while La Nacional from Guatemala ages theirs at about 60%. Most of these countries have to pay taxes on the volume of rum that goes into the barrels, not on what comes out at the time of bottling, thus having to pay taxes on product they don't even have.

Aroma

From the Middle English "aromat" meaning "spice," from Old French, derived from the Latin "aromat", from Greek "arOmat". The word "aroma" was first used in 1814. This word is commonly used to define the collective set of smells or odors that can be perceived by the human nose. As it relates to distilled beverages, aromas are usually categorized as Pleasant (or "Desired") and Unpleasant (or "Undesired").



Pleasant Aromas usually include:

- Smooth (Butter, Butterscotch, Oily)
- Herbaceous (Tea, Grassy, Minty)
- Fruity (Fresh or Dry Fruit: Peach, Apricot, Prune, Grape, Fig, Apple, Citrus, Orange Peel)
- Muscat (Grape, Raisin, Currant)
- Floral (Rose, Potpourri)
- Woody (Dusty, Plank, Vanilla, Oak, Cedar, Resinous, Cigar Box/Tobacco)
- Toasted (Coffee, Smokey)
- Nutty (Hazelnut, Almond, Walnut, Sherry)
- Sweet (Port, Sweet Sherry, Molasses, Cane juice, Brown Sugar, Chocolate, Caramel, Toffee, Honey, Jam)
- Spicy (Cinnamon, Cloves, Nutmeg, Allspice)

Unpleasant Aromas usually include:

- Chemical/Solvent (Ethanol, Acetone, Ethylacetate, Detergent)
- Sour (Rancid, Venegary, Acetic Acid)
- Pungent
- Oily (Tobacco Oil, Fishy, Lees, Fusel Oil, Fatty Acid)
- Musty (Paper, Wet Cardboard, Mushroom, Musty Cork, Musty Barrel)
- Sulphury (Sweaty, Hydrogen Sulphide, Sulphur Dioxide, Caggabe, Garlic)
- Phenolic (Tar)
- Other (Plastic, Metallic, Diesel, Scorched, Rubbery)

Barrel, Cask

From the Middle English "barel," derived from Middle French "baril". The word "barrel" first appeared in the 14th century. It is defined as "a round bulging vessel of greater length than breadth that is usually made of staves bound with hoops and has flat ends of equal diameter."

Today the word "cask" is used interchangeably with "barrel". It comes from the the Middle English "caske," perhaps from Middle French "casque" which means "helmet," from Spanish "casco" which means "potsherd, skull, helmet." It first appeared in the 15th century to define: "a barrel-shaped vessel of staves, headings, and hoops usually for liquids."

Most of the barrels used today in the aging of rums are made of oak since this type of wood does not contribute any offensive odors or tastes to the rum. The "staves" (elongated wooden pieces which make up the sides of the barrel) are often charred (burned) during the manufacturing of the barrels. This charring of the wood helps remove bad odors in the rum while at the same time imparts it with some color.

Proof

Throughout this book we'll use the term "proof" to describe the alcohol content of rums. In its most widely used form, proof refers to "American Proof," which is equivalent to exactly twice the percentage of alcohol per volume (ABV), i.e. 40% ABV is 80 Proof.

The use of proof as a measuring guide began in England a couple of centuries ago, fueled (quite literally) by the distiller's need to measure the strength of their distillates. The distillation product would be mixed with black powder



and the mixture would then be set on fire. The proof would be determined based on the type and intensity of its burning. If the flame burned slowly, evenly and clean, it would be determined that the alcohol was "black powder-proof." If the mixture did not light up, or if it did so too violently, the distiller knew that the alcohol content was either too low or too strong.

The British standard for proof is a little more complicated than its American counterpart. The British "proof spirit" contains 57.1 percent ABV at 51 degrees Fahrenheit, or 10.6 degrees Celsius. By definition, alcohol at 50 British "proof spirit" weighs exactly 12/13ths as much as an equivalent volume of distilled water at 51 degrees Fahrenheit. Using this scale, 100 degrees proof British spirit correspond to 114.2 proof in the USA. Similarly, American 100 degree proof spirit is 87.7 degree proof British. The United States standard for proof is equivalent to equal amounts of water and alcohol (50 percent ABV, or 100-proof) at 60 degrees Fahrenheit (approximately 15.6 Celsius).

The term "Over-Proof" refers to British proof over 100. To convert British Over-Proof to percentage of alcohol by volume, take the Over-Proof number, add 100 to it, and multiply it by 0.571. Using this scale, 75 Over-Proof is equivalent to 100% ABV, or pure alcohol. British and Canadian Over-Proof are one and the same. Depending on what country you are in, the concentration of alcohol in a beverage may also be represented in degrees (°), where each degree is equivalent to one percent. It was a common practice in Mexico and other Latin American countries up until this last decade to indicate the alcohol content of beverages in Gay-Lussac degrees (°G.L.), and even though this practice is not widely employed today, you can still find old bottles with this scale inscribed on the labels.

Rhum, Ron

"Rhum" and "Ron" are equivalents of "Rum" in French and Spanish respectively.

White Rums

Since all the rum in the world, regardless of which category it falls into (see Lesson 1), starts its life as white rum, we could say that white rums are the foundation of the Rum Industry.

"White Rums" are usually labeled by their manufacturers as: White, Clear, Crystal, Cristal, Blanc, Blanco, Silver, Plata or Light. A very pragmatic way of looking at this is to say that white rums are transparent or clear rums, as long as they are not over-proof and they are not flavored. In Barbados, and in several other Caribbean countries, White Rums are also known as "see through" rums.

Over the years many companies have decided to go after vodka drinkers as a way of increasing their market share. For this reason it is understandable to see white rums that are extremely neutral and insipid, characteristics recognized and appreciated by vodka lovers.

Contact with the oak barrels imparts a light amber color into the rum. In most cases the rum is filtered prior to bottling to remove this color. Other times it is bottled straight, bypassing the filtration. Although purists could argue that these unfiltered aged rums are no longer "white," nothing prevents the manufacturers from selling them as such.

Most of the rum sold in the world is white and 80-Proof. While there are those who believe that White Rums' sole purpose in life is to be used only as mixers, others argue that all rum should be white and that it should be enjoyed neat (straight).



The Most Popular Type of Rum in the World

Just how popular is white rum in the world? Walk into any liquor store that sells rum and you will always find at least one or two brands. Walk into any bar that serves rum and you will find it there as well. Open any book with rum cocktail recipes and look at the ingredients of a dozen or more recipes. Generally 50 to 75% of the recipes (or more) will call for white rum.

What is it about white rum that makes it so popular? There are many answers to this question:

- 1) White rum is very neutral in taste and aroma, which makes it a very good mixer.
- 2) It is made from sugarcane or sugarcane derivatives, which makes it a great companion for sweet or sugary juices or syrups.
- 3) Since it is aged for such a short amount of time, it is less expensive than all other forms of rum, thus it is very economical, which translates into higher profits for bars and restaurants.

The White Rum Market Share

(Source: Impact Databank 2003)

The top four brands in the USA, in terms of volume, are:

- Bacardi - 7.68 million nine-liter cases
- Captain Morgan - 3.9 million nine-liter cases
- Castillo - 1.12 million nine-liter cases
- Ronrico - 480,000 nine-liter cases

Most of these numbers reflect healthy growth margins from previous years, an indication that rum as a whole is growing in popularity. But while white rums appear to dominate the rum market, they are competing fiercely against two other segments that have seen unprecedented growth: “flavored” and “premium” rums, both of which will be covered in future lessons.

Misconceptions About White Rum

There is a general misconception that white rums are not aged. Actually, all rums bottled in Puerto Rico have to have been aged for at least one year. All most all of the rum is aged in oak barrels that have previously been used to age other spirits such as whiskey or bourbon.

Once the spirit has been aged the rum is drained from the barrel and then carbon filtered to remove the color gained during the time spent aging. Some white rums such as Barcelo Gran Blanc are aged as many as four years before carbon filtering to return the spirit to the clear appearance it had when it was distilled. Carbon filtering also removes some residual congeners.



Hands-on-Exercise: Cane Juice vs. Molasses

This exercise requires for you to go to a liquor store (or bar) that has at least one white rum made from sugarcane juice. Chances are that if you find it, it will come from the French West Indies and it'll be called "Rhum Blanc" or something similar to that.

Once you've found your cane juice white rum, find a molasses-based white rum. This part should be easier, since most white rums in the world are made from molasses. Any Cuban or Puerto Rican style will do.

Pour 2 to 4 ounces of each rum into separate snifters, depending on the size of the snifters. Water down each sample to about 20% alcohol by volume (remember the exercise in Lesson 1?) and cover the snifters with coasters, napkins or small plates.

Step 1:

If you created your Rum Essence Kit, as described in Lesson 1, take out the "Molasses" sample now and spend a few moments analyzing the aroma. Now uncover the snifter containing the White Rum and see if you can detect the smell of molasses. It should be there. If at first you don't detect it, cover the snifter and swirl its contents gently for a few seconds and try again. See how many other aromas you can detect. Once you are satisfied with your assessment, cover the snifter.

Step 2:

Now you are ready to test the sugarcane juice rum (rhum). Uncover the snifter and see if you can detect the aroma of molasses. It should not be there, at least not in the same form as in the previous rum. Instead you should find fruity and floral notes not present in the molasses rum. There will be an area of overlap between both samples. The sweet/sugary overlap is what we commonly refer to as "raw sugarcane aroma/taste." Depending on the quality of the molasses used (the higher the sugar content, the better), the rum will have more of these fruity, floral and raw sugar components. Continue analyzing the sugarcane juice rum until you are satisfied with your assessment. Go back and forth between both samples as many times as you like. Remember to **ONLY** use your sense of smell.

Step 3:

Once your sense of smell has painted a good picture of each rum, go ahead and taste them, first the less sweet and then the sweeter. See if your sense of taste confirms, denies or complements your mental picture.



From The Rum Bar: Featured Cocktail

History tells that while Ernest Hemmingway was living in Cuba one of his favorite cocktails was the Mojito, a cocktail typically prepared using white rum. Even James Bond, the perennial "shaken, not stirred" Martini drinker seems to be adjusting to the reality of the new world order by enjoying a Mojito in his latest movie "Die Another Day".

For this and many other reasons, we are compelled to suggest this superb mix as our featured cocktail for this lesson.

Basic Mojito

3 fresh Mint Sprigs
2 tsp Sugar
3 Tbsp. Lemon Juice (or Lime), fresh
1 ½ oz Light Rum
Club Soda, Chilled

In a tall thin glass, crush part of the mint with a fork to coat the inside. Add the sugar and lemon juice and stir thoroughly. Top with ice. Add rum and mix. Top off with club soda (or seltzer). Add a lemon slice and the remaining mint. Serves one.

Mojito Mulato

2 oz. Matusalem Classic Black Rum / Dark Rum
1 Tbsp. Sugar
Juice of 2 Small Limes
4-5 Ice Cubes
1 4"-5" Sprig of Mint (with leaves and stem)
3-4 oz. Club Soda

Place the sugar and lime juice in a tall glass. Stir with a long spoon until the sugar dissolves. Add the mint and crush completely against the bottom and sides of the glass. Add the ice cubes and pour in the rum. Stir well. Slowly add enough club soda to top the glass. Stir again and garnish with a short mint sprig.

Monin Mojito

1 oz. Mojito Mint Syrup*
1 ½ oz. Rum
Juice of ½ Large Lime
5 oz. Club Soda

Shake all ingredients. Serve in a 16 oz. glass, garnish with mint sprig or lime wheel.

Frozen Mojito

1 oz. Mojito Mint Syrup*
2 oz. Rum
Juice of ½ Large Lime
1 oz. Club Soda
2 Cups of Ice

Blend ingredients together. Serve in a 16 oz. glass. Garnish with mint sprig or lime wheel and a straw.

Frozen Tropical Mojito

1 ½ oz. Rum
½ oz. Mojito Mint Syrup*
1 oz. Mango Syrup
½ oz. Fresh Lime Juice
2 Mint Leaves
1 Cup of Ice

Pour ingredients into blender. Blend until smooth. Pour into glass. Garnish with mint sprig or lime wheel.

La Bodeguita's Mojito

12 Mint Leaves (with stems)
1 Tbsp. Sugar
2 oz. Citrus Rum / Bacardi Limón
1 oz. Fresh squeezed Lemon Juice
1 oz. Fresh squeezed Lime Juice
2 oz. Soda Water

In a collins glass, place mint and a teaspoon of sugar (keep the stems for extra flavor). Crush the mint and sugar using a muddler. Add rum and fresh juices. Mix again with muddler. Finish with soda water followed by crushed ice.

* Note: You can purchase the Mojito Mint Syrup from www.rumshop.net



From The Rum Bar - Continued

There are several keys to making a great mojito:

- 1) Use fresh ingredients whenever possible, this includes fresh limes and fresh mint (“hierbabuena”) leaves. If you can grow your own, consider yourself fortunate and take advantage of it.
- 2) For the sparkliest, freshest experience, consume the mojito immediately after it is prepared. It is a cocktail that does not improve with time (ice cubes melt, watering down the drink, Club Soda (carbonated water) loses its fiz, and fresh lime juice starts to oxidize, imparting a metallic taste to the drink).
- 3) As you can see in the previous page, the simple harmony of the mojito is great by itself, but also allows for many creative variations. Experiment substituting the club soda with Sprite, Ginger Ale or lemon/lime flavored mineral water. Creative variations also include freezing pieces of mint or lime peel inside the ice cubes.

Let your imagination fly, just remember to respect and enhance if possible the four key elements of the mojito: Rum, Lime, Mint and Sugar.

Lesson II Questionnaire

1. What type of barrels are used to age most of the rum produced today?
2. List three pleasant and three unpleasant aromas associated with distilled beverages.
3. What does A.B.V. stand for?
4. What is the USA standard for proof?
5. What do “Ron” and “Rhum” mean?
6. What is the popular name given to white rums in Barbados?
7. White rum absorbs color during aging. What is the process for removing this color?
8. Name two common misconceptions about white rum.
9. List three reasons why white rum is so popular.
10. What are the four key elements of the Mojito?



Answers to Lesson I Questionnaire

Q1. What are the six categories rum can be grouped in based on distillation, blending and aging techniques?

A: White, Gold, Black/Dark, Spiced/Flavored, Over-Proof and Premium.

Q2. After the juice has been extracted from the sugarcane, what is the next process? What occurs in this process?

A: Filtering: the juice obtained from the milling is filtered to remove any cane residue. After the juice has been extracted from the sugarcane, it undergoes a clarification process, where solids in suspension are removed. At this time, the concentration of sugar in the juice is about 16%.

Q3. When the sugarcanes leave the fields, how much of their weight is actually sugar?

A: About 10 to 13.5% of the weight is sugar.

Q4. By now we know that Rum is older than Whisky, but is it older than Brandy?

A: No, Brandy is much older than Rum. The origin of Brandy can be traced back to the expanding Moslem Mediterranean states in the 7th and 8th centuries. Arab alchemists experimented with distilling grapes and other fruits in order to make medicinal spirits. Their knowledge and techniques soon spread, with grape Brandy production appearing in Spain by the end of the 8th century.

Q5. If you owned your own sugarcane fields and distillery, which type of rum would be the most expensive to make? Which would be the cheapest?

A: The most expensive would be made from 100% sugarcane juice. The cheapest would be made from molasses (if you sell sugar and rum you'll make more money than if you only sell rum).

Q6. Why is it important to work with a Rum Essence Kit?

A: Because smell is such a big part of taste. Also, when one has to test a large number of samples, a good sense of smell is faster (and less intoxicating) than a good sense of taste.





BRINLEY
GOLD
Vanilla Rum

St. Kitts, West Indies



SIMPLY THE
SMOOTHEST FLAVORED RUM
IN THE WORLD

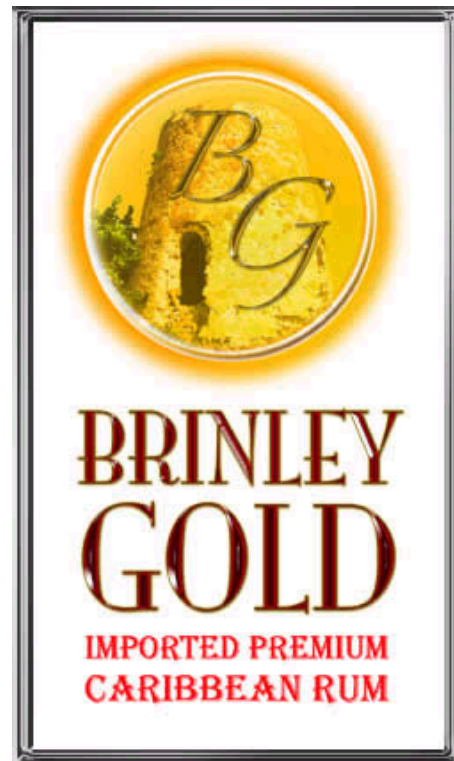
Gold Medal Winner at the International Rum Festival. www.brinleygoldrum.com

Brinley Gold Vanilla Rum

How smooth can a rum be?

“I invite you to taste the real Caribbean,” states G. Zachary Brinley, President of Brinley & Company, sellers of Brinley Gold flavored rums, from the Caribbean island of St. Kitts. “Our vanilla is a beautiful blend with a dark color and rich flavor. It will blow you away,” Brinley says. “We’ve already won a Gold Medal at the prestigious International Rum Festival in St. Johns, Newfoundland, and our U.S. approval to import just arrived this spring. The vanilla rum sits on your tongue and is incredibly smooth.” At the Penthouse Magazine Rum Show at Noche on Broadway in New York City last year, hundreds of blenders, bottlers, distillers and rum lovers experienced the kind of buzz Brinley Gold can create. More cases were emptied at the bar than any other competing rum.

Brinley Gold Vanilla Rum is a molasses based rum with natural vanilla flavor. The dark brown colored rum is 36% alcohol by volume (72 proof) and is very smooth in taste. To give this exceptional product the perfect package, an Italian frosted serenade bottle (750mL), a black bartop cork, and an embossed label. are used. The total package has a very elegant appearance, which mirrors its delicious taste.



Brinley Gold Rum is blended by the St. Kitts Rum Company on the Caribbean island of St. Kitts. Master blender Michel Joly, who trained in France, originally came to St. Kitts to make rum with Baron Edmond de Rothschild in 1990 at the Cane Spirit Rothschild distillery (CSR). Michel, a Brinley family friend, is an experienced distiller and winemaker, and “offers Brinley Gold a Frenchman’s nose and taste buds that have been critical to our success,” Brinley explains.

St. Kitts, one of the few Caribbean islands without a strong international presence in the rum industry up until now, is an island steeped in centuries-old, sugar-cane-growing and rum-making traditions, according to Brinley. “My family has been conducting business on this beautiful island for nearly two decades and realized just recently that these authentic treasures should be made available to the outside world.” In fact, Brinley & Company has been a family centered venture from the beginning involving G. Zachary, who left Wall Street to take on the presidency, G. Robert, his father, Maryann, his mother and Maggie, his sister. “We’ve all offered our creativity and enthusiasm to the new business and invite you to visit the island itself.”

The *St. Kitts Rum Shoppe* opened on Port Zante, in the capital city of Basseterre, just last winter has seen thousands of cruise passengers enjoy Brinley Gold. Contests offering free vacations to St. Kitts with accommodations at the Frigate Bay Resort, are also planned for the future. To learn more about Brinley & Company, owners of the St. Kitts Rum Company, visit the website at www.brinleygoldrum.com or write to gzachary@brinleygoldrum.com.

“To Good Friends, Good Health, and Good Spirits!”

Zach Brinley
Maryann Brinley

Bob Brinley
Maggie Brinley