Yo Ho Ho
And a
Bottle of Rum

When I dream of Heaven
I dream of the past
Surrounded by good friends
and raising a glass.

Newcomers Whisky Club
June 9, 2014
All about Rum

Rum, and its fraternal twin, cane spirit, are made by distilling fermented sugar and water. This sugar comes from the sugar cane and is fermented from cane juice, concentrated cane juice, or molasses.

Molasses is the sweet, sticky residue that remains after sugar cane juice is boiled and the crystallized sugar is extracted. Molasses is over 50% sugar, but it also contains significant amounts of minerals and other trace elements, which can contribute to the final flavor.

Depending on the recipe, the "wash" (the cane juice, or molasses and water) is fermented, using either cultured yeast or airborne wild yeasts, for a period ranging from 24 hours for light Rums up to several weeks for heavy, full varieties.

Distillation of Rum

The choice of stills has a profound effect on the final character of Rum. All Rums come out of the still as clear, colorless spirits. Barrel aging and the use of added caramel determine their final color.

Lighter Rums are highly rectified (purified and blended) and are produced in column or continuous stills, after which they are usually charcoal-filtered and sometimes aged in old oak casks for a few months to add a degree of smoothness. Most light Rums have minimal flavors and aroma, and are very similar to Vodka, particularly those brands that have been charcoal-filtered.

Heavier Rums are usually distilled in pot stills; similar to those used to produce Cognacs and Scotch whiskies. Pot stills are less "efficient" than column stills and some congeners (fusel oils and other flavor elements) are carried over with the alcohol. Some brands of Rum are made by blending pot and column distilled Rums in a manner similar to Armagnac production.
Classifications of Rum

White Rums are generally light-bodied (although there are a few heavy-bodied White Rums in the French islands). They are usually clear and have a very subtle flavor profile. If they are aged in oak casks to create a smooth palate they are then usually filtered to remove any color. White Rums are primarily used as mixers and blend particularly well with fruit flavors.

Golden Rums, also known as Amber Rums, are generally medium-bodied. Most have spent several years aging in oak casks, which give them smooth, mellow palates.

Dark Rums are traditionally full-bodied, rich, caramel-dominated Rums. The best are produced mostly from pot stills and frequently aged in oak casks for extended periods. The richest of these Rums are consumed straight up.

Spiced Rums can be white, golden, or dark Rums. They are infused with spices or fruit flavors. Rum punches (such as Planter’s Punch) are blends of Rum and fruit juices that are very popular in the Caribbean.

Añejo and Age-Dated Rums are aged Rums from different vintages or batches that are mixed together to insure a continuity of flavor in brands of Rum from year to year. Some aged Rums will give age statements stating the youngest Rum in the blend (e.g., 10-year-old Rum contains a blend of Rums that are at least 10 years old). A small number of French island Rums are Vintage Dated.

Rum Regions

The Caribbean is the epicenter of world Rum production. Virtually every major island group produces its own distinct Rum style.

Barbados produces light, sweetish Rums from both pot and column stills. Rum distillation began here and the Mount Gay Distillery, dating from 1663, is probably the oldest operating Rum producer in the world.

Cuba and Trinidad all produce light-bodied, crisp, clean Rums from column stills, while the Dominican Republic is notable for its full-bodied, aged Rums.

Guyana is justly famous for its rich, heavy Demerara Rums, named for a local river, which are produced from both pot and column stills. Demerara Rums can be aged for extended periods (25-year-old varieties are on the market) and are frequently used for blending with lighter Rums from other regions. Neighboring Surinam and French Guyana produce similar full-bodied Rums.

Haiti follows the French tradition of heavier Rums that are double-distilled in pot stills and aged in oak casks for three or more years to produce full-flavored, exceptionally smooth-tasting Rums.

Jamaica is well known for its rich, aromatic Rums, most of which are produced in pot stills. Jamaica has official classifications of Rum, ranging from light to very full-flavored. Jamaican Rums are extensively used for blending.

Martinique is a French island with the largest number of distilleries in the Eastern Caribbean. Both pot and column stills are used. As on other French islands such as Guadeloupe, both rhum agricole (made from sugar cane juice) and rhum industriel (made from molasses) are produced. These Rums are frequently aged in used French brandy casks for a minimum of three years. Rhum vieux (aged Rum) is frequently compared to high-quality French brandies.

Puerto Rico is known primarily for light, very dry Rums from column stills. All white Puerto Rican Rums must, by law, be aged a minimum of one year while dark Rums must be aged three years.

Only the US Virgin Islands still produce Rum, predominately making light, mixing rums from column stills, although there are some fine dark and aged sipping Rums made by the most significant producer Cruzan. These Rums, and those of nearby Grenada, also serve as the base for bay Rum, a classic aftershave lotion.

Guatemala and Nicaragua are noteworthy in Central America where a variety of primarily medium-bodied Rums from column stills that lend themselves well to aging.

Brazil produces vast quantities of mostly light Rums from column stills with unaged cane spirit called Cachaça (ca·sha·sa) the best-known example.
Venezuela makes a number of well-respected barrel-aged golden and dark Rums.

The United States has a handful of Rum distilleries in the south, producing a range of light and medium-bodied Rums that are generally marketed with Caribbean-themed names.

Canada’s 300-year-old tradition of trading Rum for dried cod fish continues in the Atlantic Maritime provinces of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia where golden Rums from Antigua, Barbados, and Jamaica are imported and aged for five years. The resulting hearty Rum is known locally as Screech.

Europe is primarily a blender of imported Rums. Both the United Kingdom and France import Rums from their former colonies in the Caribbean for aging and bottling. Heavy, dark Jamaican Rums are imported into Germany and mixed with neutral spirit at a 1:19 ratio to produce Rum verschnitt. A similar product in Austria is called Inlander Rum.

Australia produces a substantial amount of white and golden Rums in a double-distillation method utilizing both column and pot stills. Rum is the second most popular alcoholic beverage in the country after beer. Light Rums are also produced on some of the islands in the South Pacific such as Tahiti.

Asia Rums tend to follow regional sugar cane production, with white and golden Rums from column stills being produced primarily in the Philippines and Thailand.

**Rum: Its History and Significance**

The history of Rum is the history of sugar. Sugar is a sweet crystalline carbohydrate that occurs naturally in a variety of plants. One of those is the sugar cane (Saccharum officinarum), a tall, thick grass that has its origins in the islands of present-day Indonesia in the East Indies. Chinese traders spread its cultivation to Asia and on to India. Arabs in turn brought it to the Middle East and North Africa where it came to the attention of Europeans during the Crusades in the 11th century.

As the Spanish and Portuguese began to venture out into the Atlantic Ocean, they planted sugar cane in the Canary and Azore Islands. In 1493 Christopher Columbus picked up cane cuttings from the Canaries while on his second voyage to the Americas and transplanted them to Hispaniola, the island in the Caribbean that is now shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Portuguese explorers soon did likewise in Brazil.

The Caribbean basin proved to have an ideal climate for growing sugar cane, and sugar production quickly spread around the islands. The insatiable demand in Europe for sugar soon led to the establishment of hundreds of sugar cane plantations and mills in the various English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Dutch colonies. These mills crushed the harvested cane and extracted the juice. Boiling this juice caused chunks of crystallized sugar to form. The remaining unsolidified juice was called melazas (from "miel," the Spanish word for honey); in English this became molasses.

Molasses is a sticky syrup that still contains a significant amount of sugar. Sugar mill operators soon noticed that when it was mixed with water and left out in the sun it would ferment. By the 1650s this former waste product was being distilled into a spirit.

In the English colonies it was called Kill Devil (from its tendency to cause a nasty hangover or its perceived medicinal power, take your choice) or rumbullion (origins uncertain), which was shortened over the years to our modern word Rum. The French render this word as rhum, while the Spanish call it ron.

Locally, Rum was used as cure-all for many of the aches and pains that afflicted those living in the tropics. Sugar plantation owners also sold it, at discounted prices, to naval ships that were on station in the Caribbean in order to encourage their presence in local waters and thus discourage the attentions of marauding pirates.

The British navy adopted a daily ration of a half-pint of 160 proof Rum by the 1730s. This ration was subsequently modified by mixing it with an equal amount of water to produce a drink called grog, which remained a staple of British naval life until 1969.

This naval-Rum connection introduced Rum to the outside world and by the late 17th century a thriving export trade developed. The British islands shipped Rum to Great Britain (where it was mixed into Rum punches and replaced gin as the dominant spirit in the 18th century) and to the British colonies in North America where it became very popular. This export of Rum to North America, in exchange for New England lumber and dried cod (still a culinary staple in the Caribbean) soon changed over to the export of molasses to distilleries in New England. This
was done in order to avoid laws from the British parliament, which protected British distillers by forbidding the trade in spirits directly between colonies. This law was, at best, honored in the breech, and smuggling soon became rampant.

The shipping of molasses to make Rum in New England distilleries became part of the infamous "slavery triangle." The first leg was the shipment of molasses to New England to make Rum. The second leg was the shipment of Rum to the ports of West Africa to trade for slaves. The final leg was the passage of slave ships to the sugar plantations of the Caribbean and South America where many of the slaves were put to work in the sugar cane fields.

The disruption of trade caused by the American Revolution and the rise of whisky production in North America resulted in the slow decline of Rum’s dominance as the American national tipple. Rum production in the United States slowly decreased through the 19th century, with the last New England Rum distilleries closing at the advent of National Prohibition in 1920. The famed rumrunners of the Prohibition era were primarily smuggling whiskey into the United States.

In Europe the invention of sugar extraction from the sugar beet lessened the demand for Caribbean sugar, reducing the amount of molasses being produced and the resulting amount of Rum being distilled. Many small plantations and their stills were closed. Rum production receded, for the most part, to countries where sugar cane was grown.

The modern history of Rum owes a lot to the spread of air conditioning and the growth of tourism. In the second half of the 20th century, modern air conditioning made it possible for large numbers of people to migrate to warm-weather regions where Rum remained the dominant spirit. Additionally, the explosive increase in the number of North American and European tourists into Rum-drinking regions lead to a steady rise in the popularity of Rum-based mixed drinks. Nowadays White Rum gives Vodka serious competition as the mixer of choice in a number of distinctively non-tropical markets.

Aged Rums are gaining new standing among consumers of single malt Scotch whiskies, Armagnacs, and small-batch Bourbons who are learning to appreciate the subtle complexities of these Rums. The pot still Rums of Guyana and Jamaica have a particular appeal for Scotch whisky drinkers (it is no accident that the Scottish whisky merchant and bottler Cadenhead also ages and bottles Demerara Rum), while the subtle and complex rhums of Martinique and Guadeloupe mirror the flavor profiles of the top French brandies in Cognac and Armagnac.

Source: www.tastings.com/spirits/rum.html

Bundaberg Distillers No. 3
125th Anniversary Ltd Edition,
Travel Retail / Duty Free only, approx. $50, 43% abv
Australia

While the name 'Bundaberg' has a certain character, perhaps you'll agree that it's not a name that trips lightly off the tongue! So why Bundaberg Rum? Well, it's the name of a town in Queensland, Australia. It is near the coast, some four hundred kilometres north of Brisbane. The town was established in the 1860s and, with its tropical climate and rich soil, the surrounding area soon became known for growing sugar cane.

The history of Bundaberg Rum began over one hundred years ago in the Bundaberg sugar cane region of Central Queensland. Bundaberg first began producing commercial sugar in 1872, but the real boom came in the 1880s when Queensland enjoyed a surge of economic growth. With this growth came the problem of what to do with the by-product of molasses after the sugar was extracted. The farmers knew it could be converted into rum and little distilleries cropped up all over Queensland.

In 1888, several of the small sugar producers banded together to float a new public company, The Bundaberg Distilling Company, and promptly set about making the product that quickly became 'Famous' for its taste and quality. 110 years later, Bundaberg Rum, through its trials and tribulations, has gained recognition as one of Australia's famous spirits.

Distillery Description.
A limited edition of Distiller’s No. 3 released 5th August 2013 to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Bundaberg Distilling Company. This beautiful rum is triple filtered to endow it with an unmistakably smooth, silky finish.

The Triple Filtering Process: Filter 1 – Aged rum is filtered through the carbon filtration plant, removing from the spirit some of the heavier flavoured compounds and colour to create mellower, sweeter tasting rum.
**Filter 2** – Rum is then chill filtered at temperatures below 2°C to remove any natural haze forming compounds which are found naturally in rum after maturation in wood.

**Filter 3** – Polish filter is used as the final filtration before the rum heads to bottling hall. This is to continue to ensure and keep to our high quality standards in rum production.

**Tasting Notes:** This rum is aged for a minimum of 2 years and differs quite a bit in colour from our other rums in the range and is a lighter warm amber colour. It displays a nose of mellow citrus, molasses and light hints of vanilla. It is perfect over ice or accompanied with a mixer of your choice.

**Trivia:** In 1986, Bundaberg opened up a Tourist Centre uniquely shaped as an oak cask set on its side.

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**El Dorado Special Reserve 21 Yr.**

*Specs, $79.99, 43% abv*

**Demerara Distillers, Georgetown, Guyana**

The fertile banks of the Demerara River were cultivated by indigenous inhabitants long before European planters arrived in the 16th century. In the 17th and 18th centuries, more than 200 plantations produced sugar and rum in Demerara County. Demerara sugar was much sought after while the rum became one of the key ingredients in the Royal Navy Rum which came to be known as Pusser’s Rum.

In the last century, the remaining Guyanese distilleries were consolidated by Demerara Distillers Limited on the site of the Diamond Plantation and today operates as the sole rum producer in Guyana with a production capacity of more than 26M liters of pure alcohol annually.

The name Demerara rum refers to rum produced in Guyana. The trademark 'Demerara' lapsed but is being reclaimed. In the meantime, a number of rum and sugar producers around the world have begun using the word Demerara in their product name. In order to protect their name, Demerara Distillers has discontinued the practice of selling bulk rum to other bottlers to be bottled as Demerara rum. Today all rum bottled under the Demerara Rum name must come from Demerara Distillers in Guyana.

Today, DDL operates a number of stills used to make a light and heavy type rums. DDL also operates the last remaining wooden stills in the Caribbean. With nine widely varying types of stills at work (copper pot, steam-heated wooden, column, etc.), it’s no wonder El Dorado produces a wide variety of fine and uniquely tasting rums. All of El Dorado’s aged rums offer bold flavors, and the difference between their 12 and 15 year old rums is far more than three more years aging in used American oak bourbon casks. They are blends of rums produced in unique stills, yielding rums of quite different flavors.

**Distillery Description:**

“A monumental aged rum that is one of the world’s greatest rum drinking experiences”, that is how the Beverage Tasting Institute of Chicago summed up their appreciation of **El Dorado 21 Year Old Special Reserve**. Designed for true

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rare for at least 21 years, from the Enmore wooden Coffey still, the Versailles single wooden pot still and the Albion Savalle still.

**Tasting Notes**
Lush tropical fruit and spice nose with hints of honey and dark sugar. Round, mellow, full bodied palate with rich flavours of fruit and spice.

**Miscellaneous Reviews**

The aroma is delightful. As I take it all in, I’m sensing a smooth, non-assertive oak foundation with caramel crème just above. Hints of vanilla and banana conjure up images of banana crème pie. We’re off to a good start here, folks. Now for a taste. As the rum hits my mouth, I’m a bit surprised by the level of heat and spice I’m getting from such a smooth smelling character. The creamy texture has coated my mouth and tongue, and I’m sensing a little sweetness, but it’s overmatched by the spice. The flavors initially run together in a fairly busy mélange and I’m having trouble picking out the individual components. Let’s try another sip. The caramel is back now, but it’s combined with a molasses flavor at mid-palate, and on the round periphery, I’m sensing a bit of citrus for the first time—almost like a blood orange—tart and sweet at the same time with just a hint of bitterness. The spice notes include cinnamon and nutmeg. Further tastes reveal a smoky quality that is pervasive in the extremely long finish. As I continue to sip, the smoky quality is really striking. I could see a peated Scotch drinker really loving this rum (www.inuakena.com)

I instantly smell brown sugar, molasses, vanilla, and toffee. As the glass sits I can pick up orange, spice and chocolate. It smells massively complex, revealing new aromas as the glass sits. This smells like it will be very sweet. In the mouth: As soon as the rum hits my tongue my mouth is enveloped by sweetness. What does surprise me is how dry the rum is.....I didn’t expect that. There is instant heat and warmth and I can pick up dates, spicy oak and toffee, immediately followed by an almost coffee like taste. This is definitely robust and full-bodied. It’s so oily you feel like you could bite into it. It is massively complex with layer upon layer of flavours. There is absolutely no burn, just spice, chocolate and date-like toffee lingering in my mouth long after the rum has gone. Later there is an aroma of leathery tobacco left on the glass.....it’s definitely a keeper! (www.rumdiariesblog.wordpress.com)

**Notes,**
from Barbados and some older rums to give it a smoother finish and body. After blending the aged rums they are aged an additional full year in a first fill Pierre Ferrand – Grande Champagne - Cognac Cask. Double aging gives the rum an incomparably round and creamy palate.

**Tasting Notes:**
The colour of old mahogany, Plantation XO 20th Anniversary reveals a nose with exotic notes of sugarcane, oaky vanilla and toasted coconut, enhanced by more complex aromas of cocoa, candied orange and cigar box.

**Miscellaneous Reviews:**
Once in the glass, the rum brightens up and has a gorgeous golden bronze color. A swirl in the snifter reveals numerous slender legs that develop slowly from a ring that forms toward the top of the glass. Clearly we have a nice viscosity here. The nose carries with it very little astringency, encouraging me to take another deep breath. The aroma is like a tropical cocktail—vanilla gives way to coconut, then banana turns to butterscotch. I simple can’t wait any longer to taste it. The mouth feel is smooth, but with a kick of spice—a superb balance has been achieved between the smooth butter and the sharp spice notes. Vanilla is here, but in a modest way—the caramel, however, shines right through. The finish is extremely long, carrying with it the spices and caramel. (www.inuakena.com)

**Nose:** Hints of spicy oak on the nose, with guava, a little desiccated coconut and dried banana. Buttery. **Palate:** Spiced, creamy palate entry, with sweet vanilla notes and caramel. Oaky spices. **Finish:** Caramel. Toasted oak. (www.masterofmalt.com)

In the glass: The rum is a dark copper with lighter bronze flashes. It instantly appears to have a sheen which leaves thick droplets on the sides of the glass. I can smell tropical fruit. Bananas, sweet mango and coconut. There is also a definite vanilla note. This is all rounded off by a slight oakiness that tinges your nose. In the mouth: There is a tingle from the heat of the rum and a hint of oak but these instantly give way as the rich honeyed sweetness coats your tongue. Sweet molasses is present leading into a taste of mango on your tongue helped along by a little vanilla. There is a little peppery spice on the finish which is long and sweet but gradually becoming dry, then leaving the tropical fruit and coconut that I could smell in the glass. This is a massive encouragement to fill the glass again. (www.rumdiariesblog.wordpress.com)

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**Ron Zacapa Sistema Solera 23**
**Total Wine, $35.99, 40% abv**
**Guatemala**

The story of ultra-premium Zacapa starts literally from the ground up. From the sugar cane of the volcano-shadowed lowlands, to an ageing process which takes place 2300 meters above sea level, each aspect of production takes place under the watchful eye of Master Blender Lorena Vásquez.

There are two varieties of Zacapa: delicate and complex Zacapa 23, and expressive and balanced Zacapa XO. While Zacapa 23 is best enjoyed neat or over one large ice cube, Zacapa XO is at its’ best neat in the signature Riedel Zacapa glass.

The tropical climate and lowland volcanic soil of Guatemala yield an ultra-high grade sugar cane and, unlike most rums that use molasses, Zacapa is created from the concentrated first pressing of sugar cane or ‘virgin sugar cane honey’, which contributes to its award-winning taste.

Aged and blended in the mountains at a location romantically known as the ‘House Above the Clouds’, the cool air slows ageing, allowing Zacapa time to rest and develop its profound character. However, altitude alone is not enough to produce the deep and complex flavour of Zacapa.

A perfectionist at heart, passionate about rum and devoted to her craft, Lorena Vásquez uses a unique Sistema Solera ageing process to produce Zacapa. Based on a centuries-old Spanish method of ageing Sherries, rums of different ages are slowly blended in a sequence of barrels which previously held American whiskies, sweet Sherries and fine Pedro Ximenez wines. For Zacapa XO, a final ageing stage occurs in French cognac barrels. The rums are also rested in once re-charred American white oak barrels, to impart additional character from the wood.

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Depending on the variety, ageing takes between 6 and 25 years, and it's well worth the wait. As Lorena Vásquez explains, ‘By slowly ageing our rums at altitude and using the complex Sistema Solera, we allow the rum and the wood sufficient time to exchange their individual virtues, resulting in the incredible profile and depth that define Zacapa.’

Inexorably linked to Guatemala’s history and culture, the final touch in the production process is the hand-made woven band crafted from dried palm leaves, or petate, which wraps every bottle. Meticulously produced by highly skilled local craftswomen, petate is an art which has been perfected by the Mayan people since 1400 BC and is the embodiment of the quality and provenance which characterizes Zacapa rum.

**Tasting Notes:**
Zacapa is aged at high altitude where the temperature is lower. The lower temperature also directly influences the oxygen levels which are lower as well, and this lower oxygen level aids in a slower aging process. The slower aging, allows for more time for the aromas and flavors to combine.

**Miscellaneous Reviews:**
Clear, tawny brown amber. Toffee, caramel and tobacco nose with aromas of overripe banana maraschino cherry, caramelised fruit, espresso coffee and roast chestnut. Complex, slightly sweet, fruity, honeyed palate with rich vanilla, toffee, coffee, cherry, sweet molasses, cacao, smoky wood, tobacco and a chili-chocolate and gentle nutmeg spice. Long toasted hazelnut and caramel finish with lingering spicy fudge. ([www.diffordsguide.com](http://www.diffordsguide.com))

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Pumpkin Face 23 Yr.,
Total Wine, $43.99, 40% abv
Dominican Republic

Pumpkin Face Rum is a new line of ultra-premium rum imported from Dominican Republic.

The pumpkin is a symbol of celebration to people around the world. The origin of the pumpkin can be traced to North American seeds dating back to 7000 BC. The word pumpkin comes from the word "pepon", which is Greek for "large melon" and later changed by American colonists to "pumpkin". Colonists would often slice off the pumpkin top, remove the seeds, and fill it with cream, honey, eggs and spices. They cooked the pumpkin in hot ashes until blackened then enjoyed its contents. Pumpkin Face Rum honors the spirit of this tradition by filling the bottle with the finest ultra-premium rum in the world.

The bottle design is part of the ‘Ultra-Premium’ designation for these rums. The glass was sculpted in a traditional pumpkin shape with a pedestal base that reveals the brand name embossed in glass. We gave the pumpkin character by adding a mischievous facial expression that reinforces its name and celebratory representation. Its eyes and mouth are set deep into the glass and decorated with high-quality baked on decals. The white rum’s eyes and mouth are metallic silver and its clear bottle reveals the near crystal grade glass. The Reserve and aged rums are coated with organic coloring giving them a brown and black appearance respectively. Finally, the corks are custom designed, with each rum type having its own wooden color, topped off with a pewter metal medallion that reveals the embossed Pumpkin Face logo and name.

**Distillery Description:**
Pumpkin Face White Rum is beautiful, delicious, and naturally smooth. Pumpkin Face Reserve Rum is a blend of decades old hand selected aged Dominican rums. Pumpkin Face 23 was made in 1980, aged 23 years in Oak barrels, and rested for over another decade in Dominican Republic, this rum shows extraordinary elegance and complexity.
Miscellaneous Reviews:
The colour resembles a darkened penny, and the initial aroma is rich with smells of chocolate caramel and oak spices. I was delighted at how the oak spices seemed to meld into the chocolate caramel as the rum decanted. Rich toffee and tobacco aromas evolved from the glass with hints of treacle, brown sugar, and baking spices straining to push through as well. I sense whispers of vanilla, cinnamon and nutmeg within the toffee-like aroma as well as an underlying nuttiness which resembles fresh roasted walnuts. The nose translates very well into flavour, as almost all of the olfactory sensations I noted in the glass carry through to the palate. The flavours are melded together very well, and it is difficult to decide just which aspect of the rum is dominant. At first, chocolate and caramel hold sway over the rum; but as the liquid crosses my palate, spicy oak and flavours of roasted walnuts flavours slide alongside the chocolate and caramel with equal vigor. Within this menagerie of rum goodness are lovely baking spices rich with vanilla and brown sugar spices. Some dried fruitiness appears as does impressions of canned peaches and apricots. The rum is rich in complexity yet it does not overwhelm the palate. The rum remains approachable and delightful to the last drop in the glass. The rum finishes with a bit of heated oak spice mingling with sweet chocolate and caramel. The chocolate in particular delights me as does a mild walnut-like bitterness which seems to be providing just the right counter-balance to the sweet chocolate and caramel. (www.therumhowlerblog.wordpress.com)

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Gosling’s Family Reserve Old Rum
Total Wine, $64.99, 40% abv
Bermuda

After ninety-one desperate days on a becalmed sea their charter ran out, and they put in at the nearest port, St. George’s, Bermuda. Rather than pressing on for America, James opened a shop on the King’s Parade, St. George’s in December 1806.

In 1824 James returned to England and his brother Ambrose rented a shop on Front Street in the new Capitol of Hamilton for £25 a year. The Gosling’s have maintained a store at this location for 127 years. In 1857 the firm was renamed Gosling Brothers by Ambrose’s sons. Three years later, after much trial and error, the distinctive Bermuda black rum destined to be Black Seal was formulated and offered for sale. They didn’t call it Black Seal at first. In fact, up until the First World War it was only sold from the barrel, and most folks brought in their own bottles for a “fill up”.

Eventually the black rum was sold in champagne bottles, reclaimed from the British Officer’s Mess, and the corks sealed with black sealing wax. Pretty soon people began to ask for the “Black Seal”’. Many years later the idea of the little barrel juggling “Black Seal” was born and over the years Black Seal has become synonymous with Bermuda. It is the essential additive to Bermuda fish chowder, adds the island touch to Bermuda Rum Swizzle, and is the tempest in Bermuda’s favorite cocktail – the Dark ’n Stormy®.

A family business for over two centuries Gosling’s is today the only company that blends and bottles in Bermuda and is the largest exporter of a Bermuda made product.

Blender’s Description:
Appropriately called Gosling’s Family Reserve Old Rum, it’s crafted from the same incomparable Bermuda blend as our renowned Black Seal Rum, but, we age it in our dark barrels even longer, until it acquires an extra luscious, nuanced complexity much like a rare Scotch or Cognac. Consider it the ultimate sipping rum. We do. So we carefully hand label each bottle, dip it in wax,
number it, encircle it with a metal band, then place it in a straw-filled wooden box reminiscent of days past.

The perfect Old Rum recipe:

- 1 oz. – blah, blah, blah
- ½ tsp. – blah, blah
- 2 oz. – blah, blah, blah

Our point? Old Rum is built to savour as it is poured. Add ice if you must, but nothing else other than a little eager anticipation.

Miscellaneous Reviews:

A full-bodied rum? You better believe it. Overwhelming on the nose with rich molasses, tobacco, and smoke, it somehow outdoes all this when you take a sip. A powerhouse of a rum, it hits you right up front with dark chocolate character and smoldering wood fires. More molasses come ‘round, plus a hint of honeycomb. The color of coffee, it keeps going and going, easy to sip yet devilish in its complexity. The wood plays with the sweetness and comes together to create an enticing mocha/coffee flavor that’s incredibly compelling as a dessert sipper. Few rums can manage all the tricks being pulled off right and left in this behemoth. (www.drinkhacker.com)

To the nose, Gosling’s Old Rum strikes of duality – cool light overtones counterbalanced with warm spicy undertones, along with a hint of plums beneath (a fruity, pleasant smell that I couldn’t quite place, but once a neighbor identified it as plum, it was truly unmistakable). On the tongue, Gosling’s Old is sweet and heavy. Like many fine rums, it carries as much sensation as flavor, tingling through the mouth and providing a surprisingly instant feeling of comfort to the throat and chest. It tastes of oak and aged fruit, while still clinging tightly to its core rum heritage. Gosling’s Old is more refined and approachable than Gosling’s Black Seal. But – unlike with so many other rums – this premium option doesn’t reduce its market-level cousin’s standing so much as it offers a refreshing alternative. I will continue to enjoy Gosling’s Black Seal on a regular basis without pining for the technically superior Gosling’s Old. Rather, Black Seal will continue on as a beloved staple in my rum collection for ordinary consumption, while Gosling’s Old will be untouched save for special occasions. (www.bilgemonkey.com)

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