

Rum

by Kelly Gray

RUMS ARE GROWING THANKS TO ENHANCED APPRECIATION from bar patrons and retail customers who have come to expect great things from a mature spirit.

Rum might be in third place behind vodka and whisky, but it's a winner with bartenders looking to create great cocktails. This is especially true in better bars where staff is using a more culinary approach to mixology with fresh ingredients alongside leading brands.

Master barman and industry consultant Angus Winchester of Barmatrix advises stocking a white such as Bacardi Superior, two golden rums such as Gosling or Appleton, a couple of aged rums over seven years and one dark rum. He would add to this list one agricola rum such as Cuca Fresca Cachaca, a rough cane product popular in Brazil and a key ingredient in a Caipirinha (see recipe). Interestingly,

Rum is Riding Higher

Enhanced appreciation for this mature spirit

cachaca is the third most consumed spirit in the world behind vodka and soju (rice spirit).

"The idea is to capitalize on the versatility and range of these spirits," says Winchester, a bartender that travels the world educating others on the beauty of a well made cocktail.

"With rum it's all about balance. For example, darker and heavier rum works best with tropical fruit juices in a current rendition of the Mai Tai while Cuban and island rums are lighter, crisper and fresher so they are preferred when making cocktails like Mojitos (see recipe).

Winchester suggests that these days palates have improved and people are calling for more flavour. Here, he sees aged rums much like a Caribbean Cognac. "These are excellent for sipping and slowly appreciating the robust qualities much like



Mojito

3 Mint sprigs
3 Tbsp fresh lime juice
Club soda

2 Tsp sugar
1.5 oz light rum

In a tall thin glass. Crush half the mint with lime and sugar. Top with ice. Add rum and club soda. Add remaining mint.

one would appreciate a great Scotch whisky or a Cognac.

“Rum is also a great substitution. For example, bartenders might try a rum Manhattan, but should be wary of the sweetness of the younger rums when trying some of ‘Tini’s’ that are popular using vodka,” he says, inviting bartenders to try mixing rums with sparkling apple juice or cider, something common in the U.K. but less often found here.

In Winchester’s view a bartender should be able to offer patrons bench made classics without any hesitation. “I will often order a Daiquiri just to see how it will be made and presented. Will the barman use fresh limes to make the juice? Is the simple syrup made at the bar? You’d be surprised

Caipirinha

- 1 lime
- Sugar
- 2 oz Cachaca
- Ice cubes

Wash lime and roll. Slice lime into wedges. Sprinkle sugar over limes and muddle. Add cachaca and stir. Add ice cubes and stir again

how often there are minor substitutions to the recipe or a pre-mix product is used in the blend creating something cloyingly sweet.”

Rums Gain at the Upper End

Sweet as well is the growth in Canada’s rum market. Year to date rum is up by three points, a respectable gain given the size and maturity of the sector. Case lot stands just above the 3 million mark in total rums with Bacardi the hands down winner with sales of 1.2 million cases.

“People are now more appreciative of quality and see the incredible value available in moving up where better brands are not much more expensive, says Rob McPherson, vice-president marketing Bacardi Canada.”

Peter Hottmann agrees. Hottmann is global consumer marketing manager with J Wray & Nephew, the parent to Appleton Jamaica Rum. Based in Toronto with an office at PMA, Hottmann sees premium entries in the rum category as the next big wave.

Indeed, Appleton offers Appleton Estate V/X, a leading amber rum with a blend of 15 different select aged rums that is the Canadian sales leader in the gold rum sector; Appleton Estate Reserve, an elegant refined transition to sipping rum with a blend of 20 different select aged rums; Appleton Estate Extra 12, a sipping rum offering rums that are a minimum of 12 years old that competes against single malts; Appleton Estate 21 year old, a hand-blended masterpiece of fine aged rums for the discriminating palate; and Appleton Estate Master Blenders Legacy,

the progeny of three generations of blending mastery with rums up to 30 years old.

“We want to transcend the category and do for rums what others like Crown Royal, Johnny Walker, Patron and Grey Goose have done for their respective sectors,” says Hottmann, remarking that fine aged gold rums are now taking shelf space away from white rums at retail outlets across the country. In fact so popular is Appleton Estate Master Blender Legacy that the LCBO is having trouble keeping the \$90 rum in stock.

Highly popular in Canada is Lambs Palm Breeze, a rum in Corby’s portfolio that sells more than 500,000 cases and was number one in the Atlantic region until the energy boom in Alberta. Now, with Maritimers flocking to the oil fields, Lambs’ number one market is Alberta by a narrow margin.

Corby also offers Havana Club, the true Cuban rum that was previously held by Pernod Ricard. This rum sells into the premium segment and tips the scales at 380,000 cases. Corby will support the brand by teaming with Cuban tourism. Expect events in every province as Corby rolls out the marketing support for this brand.

Also expect rums to continue their drive forward as consumers scale the height of appreciation. Really, rums offer tremendous versatility that cannot be ignored whether patrons seek out an exciting cocktail or a neat sipping spirit of character.

“Yes, there are other categories that are selling more, but with this kind of versatility I fully expect rum to have its day in the sun,” concludes Winchester.