

## PAIRING

## Rum Flirts With Bachelorhood but Still Mixes Well With Others

By FLORENCE FABRICANT

RUM is not a blank slate. It's a spirit that offers plenty of character and personality. Nonetheless, white and amber rums are known as cocktail ingredients, married with everything that Carmen Miranda can offer.

The classic rum drinks, like mojitos, daiquiris and Cuba libres (rum and Coca-Cola), are having a vibrant renaissance. One of my favorite rum drinks is a tall refresher, simply a combination of amber rum and pineapple juice over ice in a highball glass.

You never know where the next good rum drink will turn up, especially on a warm-weather vacation. A few weeks ago while in Caracas, Venezuela, I visited the Santa Teresa rum distillery not far from the city. Its delicious top-of-the-line amber rum, called 1796 for the date the dis-

tillery was founded, is unusual because it is aged by the solera system, like sherry, in which older spirits are drawn from barrels and blended into barrels with younger ones for more aging.

Among the cocktails served was a Double Shot, made from amber rum and the distillery's own orange-flavored rum, the only flavored rum that has a longstanding Caribbean tradition. As a substitute, Grand Marnier offers a similar flavor, with less alcohol.

At the Brandy Library in TriBeCa, Ethan Kelley, the sommelier and bar director, is a purist. One of his cocktails is the ti-punch, a rum drink from Martinique that is made with white rum (La Favorite, one of the whites that I liked), plus lime, and sweetened with sugar cane juice. As a cocktail it takes no prisoners and would satisfy a martini drinker. On a hot summer afternoon, I'd add some sparkling water.

## TI-PUNCH

Adapted from Brandy Library  
Time: 5 minutes

- 4 ounces white rum, preferably La Favorite
- 1½ ounces lime juice
- 1 ounce cane syrup or simple syrup (equal parts sugar and water, heated until sugar dissolves)
- 2 lime wedges

Sparkling water or club soda, optional.

Combine rum, lime juice and syrup in a shaker. Add ice. Stir. Pour, with ice, into large wineglasses. Add lime. If desired, add sparkling water.

Yield: 2 cocktails.

## DOUBLE SHOT

Adapted from Santa Teresa distillery, Venezuela  
Time: 5 minutes

- 2 ounces amber rum
- 2 ounces orange-flavored rum or Grand Marnier
- Juice of ½ lime
- Dash of bitters.

Combine all ingredients in a tall glass and stir. Pour over lots of ice in an old-fashioned glass.

Yield: 1 cocktail.

## Tasting Report: Long John Silver Never Had It So Good

<b>10 Cane Trinidad Light 80 proof</b>	<b>\$43</b>	<b>★★★½</b>	Neither white nor amber, but pure, smooth and elegant, with luscious sugar-cane flavor and enticing texture.
<b>Demerara El Dorado 12-Year Guyana Amber 80 proof</b>	<b>\$23</b>	<b>★★★</b>	Rich amber color, with aromas of banana and vanilla; pure and subtle.
<b>BEST VALUE</b>			
<b>St. James Royal Amber Agricole Martinique 90 proof</b>	<b>\$17</b>	<b>★★★</b>	Smooth, rich, floral; lingering flavors, with great personality.

<b>Cane Louisiana White 80 proof</b>	<b>\$24</b>	<b>★★★</b>	Vanilla aroma; smooth, with a thick texture and long, lingering flavors.
<b>Mount Gay Eclipse Barbados Amber 80 proof</b>	<b>\$18</b>	<b>★★★</b>	Mellow, pure and smooth, with vanilla and butter aromas.
<b>Palo Viejo Puerto Rico White 80 proof</b>	<b>\$11</b>	<b>★★½</b>	Pure, smooth and subtle, with rich flavors.
<b>Ron del Barrilito "Three Stars" Puerto Rico Amber 86 proof</b>	<b>\$27</b>	<b>★★½</b>	

Briny, smoky and complex, yet well balanced.

<b>Neisson Agricole Martinique White 100 proof</b>	<b>\$30</b>	<b>★★½</b>
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Complex aromas, with a delicious natural sweetness.

<b>Plantation Eight-Year Jamaica Amber 90 proof</b>	<b>\$25</b>	<b>★★½</b>
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Complex and brandylike, with fruit, floral and vanilla flavors.

<b>La Favorite Agricole Martinique White 100 proof</b>	<b>\$30</b>	<b>★★</b>
	<b>1 liter</b>	

Harsh at first, but becomes smooth; with lime and brine flavors.

## WHAT THE STARS MEAN:

(None)	Pass It By	★★★	Excellent
★	Passable	★★★★	Extraordinary
★★	Good		

Ratings reflect the panel's reaction to the rums, which were tasted with names concealed. The panelists this week are Eric Asimov; Florence Fabricant; Eben Klemm, director of cocktail development for B. R. Guest; and Clark Clark, an owner and the bar director of Bar Marché in NoLiTa. The tasted rums represent a selection generally available in good retail shops and restaurants. Prices are those paid in liquor shops in the New York region.

Tasting Coordinator: Bernard Kirsch

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