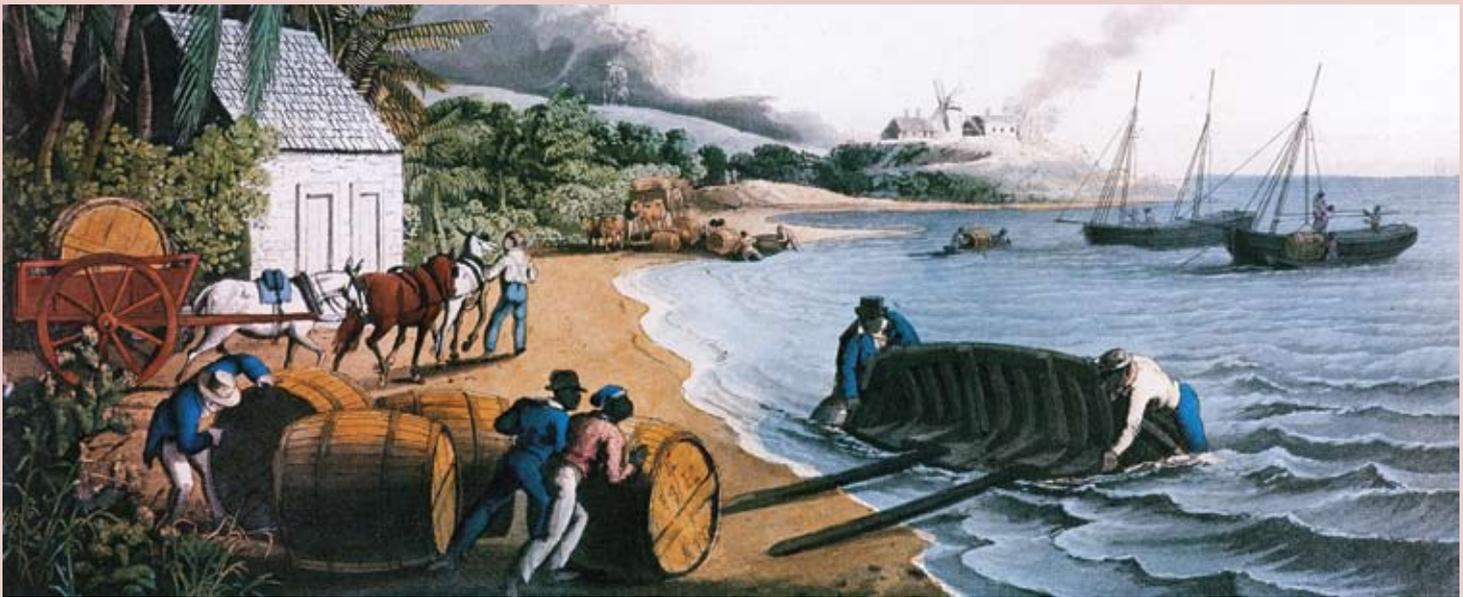


Having a RUM TIME



“There’s naught, no doubt, so much the spirit calms as rum and true religion,” wrote Lord Byron. **Suneeta Sodhi Kanga** traces the long, exciting history of rum

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UNDREDS of years ago, there was a sugar craze in Europe, and colonies were established around the Caribbean to make the sweet commodity. But the production of sugar creates a lot of by-products—particularly molasses. There wasn’t much use for the thick, sticky, sweet substance until it was discovered that molasses could be fermented and then distilled. The alcohol quickly became popular with pirates, sailors and America’s founders. Rum lovers around the world owe a great debt to a simple plant: sugar cane.

Tradition suggests rum first originated on the island of Barbados. The origin of the

word ‘rum’ is unclear. It is suggested that it might be from the British slang term for ‘the best’, as in having a rum time.

In R.L. Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*, many of the pirates stay up late and have drunken revelries organised around drinking rum. The drink is thus associated with the wild lawlessness of piracy.

While the rules for rum production vary greatly from country to country, there are two main types: light and dark. The colour of the spirit is primarily determined by the amount of time it has spent ageing in oak barrels. The longer it’s been aged, the more

colour and flavour it picks up from the wood. Some experts say that the Caribbean’s high heat and humidity help speed up the alcohol’s maturation. No matter the colour, most rum is still made from molasses, but some brands do use fresh sugar cane juice.

Though rum was commonly associated with sailors and pirates in the past, it has grown into a classy drink enjoyed by people all around the world. Rum is also one of the most consumed spirits in India.

Old Monk clearly is the most celebrated rum in India. Apart from a loyal fan base, this brand has succeeded for many years without any advertising. Old Monk is dark brown in colour and has a slight vanilla flavour. Though the brand has many variants, the most popular one remains the original Old Monk version because of its classic taste.

Bacardi is one of the most sought after rums in the Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) category. Bacardi enjoys a niche in the Indian market today. The company also produces flavoured rum with unique flavours. These include lemon, orange, raspberry, apple and dragon berry with the



base of white rum.

Captain Morgan is a spiced rum and though there are various other flavours available in the international markets, only Captain Morgan Original Spiced Rum and Captain Morgan Black Jamaica Rum are available in India.

The grades and variations used to describe rum depend on the location where a rum was produced. Despite these variations, the following terms are frequently used to describe various types of rum:

Dark rums: Also known by their particular colour, such as brown, black, or red rums, they are a grade darker than gold rums. They are usually made from caramelised sugar or molasses. They are generally aged longer, in heavily charred barrels, giving them much stronger flavours than either light or gold rums. Hints of spices can be detected, along with a strong molasses or caramel overtone. They commonly provide substance in rum drinks, as well as colour.

Gold rums: Also called amber rums, they are medium-bodied rums that are generally aged. These gain their dark colour from ageing in wooden barrels (usually the charred, white oak barrels that are the by-product of Bourbon whiskey). They have more flavour and are stronger-tasting than light rum, and can be considered midway between light rum and the darker varieties.

Light rums: Also referred to as silver or white rums, in general they have very little flavour aside from a general sweetness. Light rums are sometimes filtered after ageing to remove any colour. Their milder flavours make them popular for use in mixed drinks, as opposed to drinking them straight.

Premium rums: As with other sipping spirits such as cognac and Scotch they are in a special market category. These are generally from boutique brands that sell carefully produced and aged rums. They have more character and flavour than their mixing counterparts and are generally consumed straight.

Spiced rums: They obtain their flavours through the addition of spices and, sometimes, caramel. Most are darker in colour, and based on gold rums. Some are significantly darker, while many cheaper brands are made from inexpensive white rums and darkened with caramel colour. Among the spices added are cinnamon, rosemary, absinthe/aniseed, or pepper.

Rum can be sipped neat or on the rocks. Many famous cocktails use the spirit as a base, including the Mojito, the Piña Colada, the Daiquiri, and the Mai Tai and, of course, the simple Rum and Coke.

But when I asked Keshav Prakash, founder and curator of The Vault Fine Spirits, who has a collection of artisanal rums and other spirits, handcrafted and handpicked from far of lands and the remotest corners of the world, he said, "That would be like committing

hara-kiri!" Keshav believes that like all fine spirits artisanal rums should also be sipped. According to Keshav, Rum and Coke as a drink was made popular by the Americans to sell Coke and not rum!

Keshav believes that the new age fine spirits lover is like the new age traveller—seeking spirits off the beaten path, wanting to explore deeper histories, experimenting with tastes and flavours that go beyond the comfort zone, and willing to research and get the entire circle of family and friends to hunt for that unique craftsman/distillery and pick up the spirit straight off the maker's hand.

ARTISANAL RUMS AVAILABLE IN INDIA

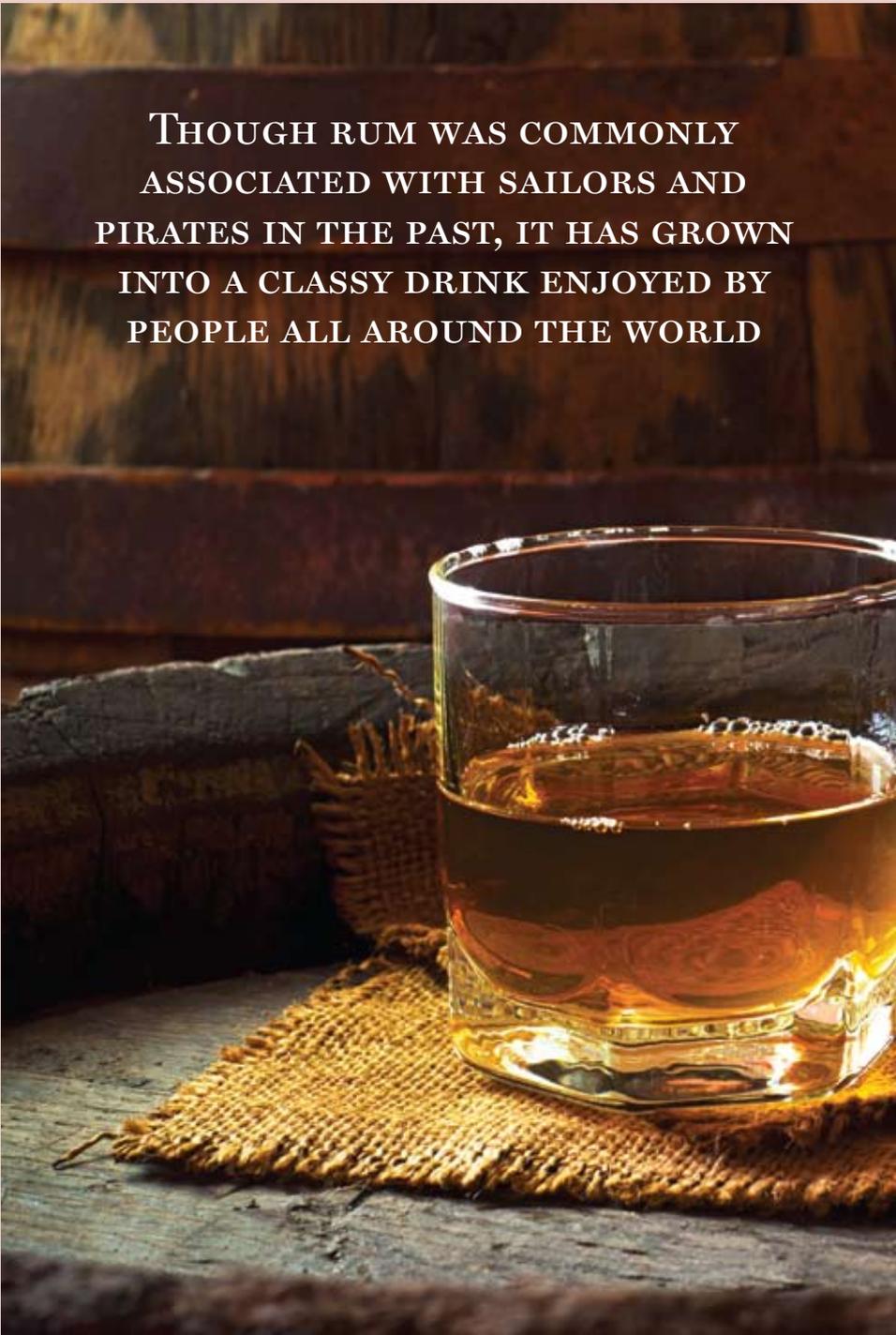
CARONI 12 YEAR OLD

Rum, the leitmotif of the Caribbean Islands, has had a long tryst with the isles and her people. One such interesting history is

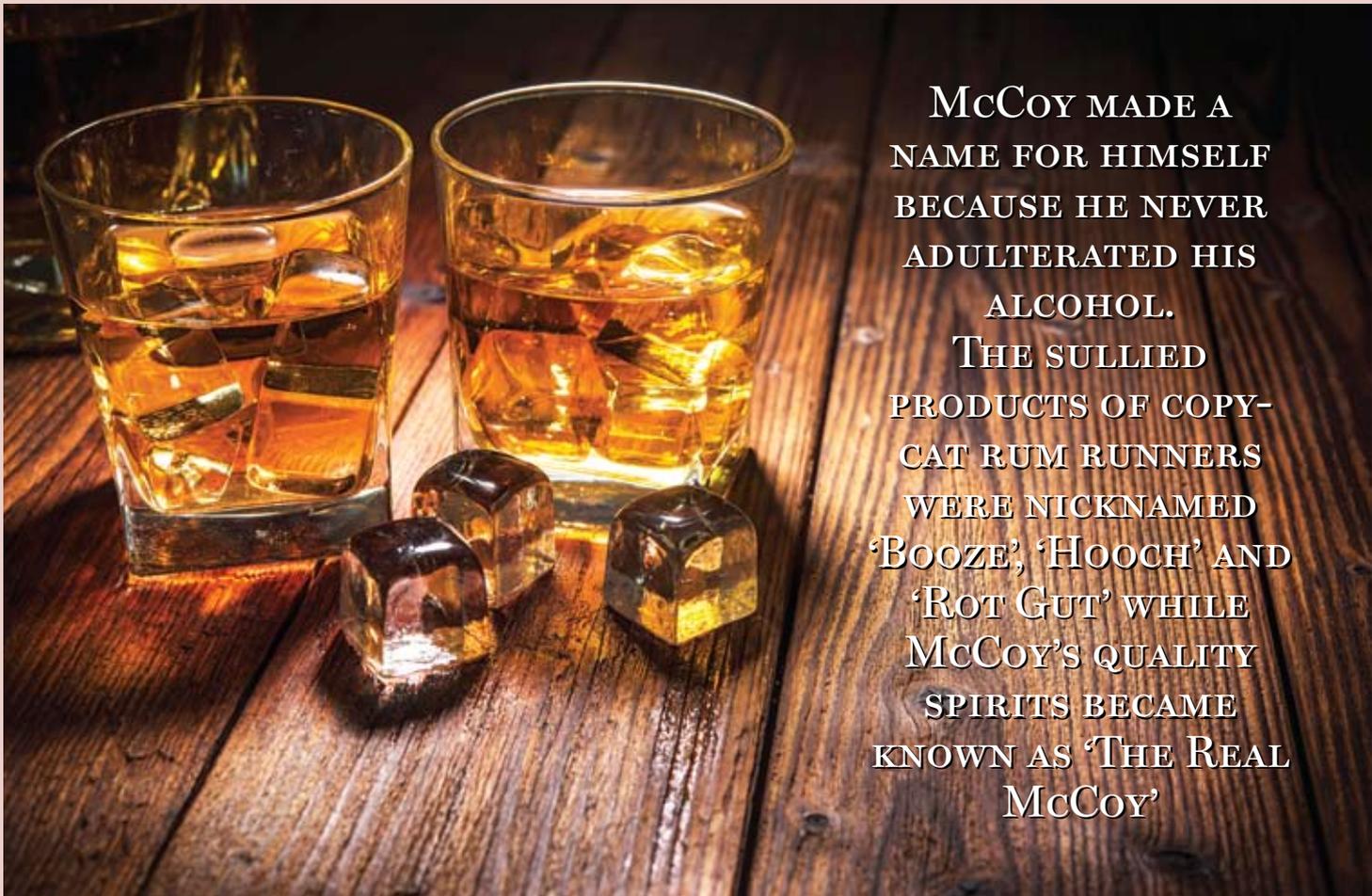
that of the Caroni Rum from the island of Trinidad. Once there were 50 distilleries in Trinidad. By 1950 there were just eight, and today there is only one. But from 1923 till 2003 was the golden rule of the Caroni Rum distillery.

Founded in the heart of the Caroni plain's sugarcane plantations, this famed Trinidad distillery was renowned throughout the world for producing one of the finest heavy rums, receiving high praise from the British Navy. In 2003 though, disaster struck. The closing of the nearby state-owned sugar refinery resulted in the gradual decline of the Trinidad sugarcane production and it was only a matter of time before the Caroni distillery was shut down.

According to Keshav, "The Caroni 12 Year Old bottling contains rum from the 2000 vintage, the last available barrels of 100% Trinidad Rum made from local molasses, distilled and matured for 12 years on the



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island. This is indeed a limited stock. It would be prudent to own one even if you are not a regular rum drinker.”

EL DORADO RUMS

Demerara has established a reputation over the last 300 years for producing the best rums in the world. El Dorado, which means ‘the Golden One’ is Guyana’s 24 carat offering to the world. Spurred on by the universal acceptance of their rum in the international markets, Demerara Distilleries has gone on to develop an unrivalled portfolio of ‘Age Statement Rums’.

15 YEAR OLD - SPECIAL RESERVE

This Special Reserve possesses the most intriguing and complex character of any rum in its class; it is truly a connoisseur’s sipping rum.

12 YEAR OLD

This fine-aged Demerara Rum is produced by master distillers since 1670. Matured for at least 12 years in oak casks, this rum is hand-blended to achieve its uniquely smooth rich character. A sure delight for the most discerning drinker, it can be savoured on the rocks or in a classic cocktail.

ELEMENTS 8 BARREL INFUSED SPICED RUM

Probably the most complex spiced rum to grace a bar, this rum is a hand blend of pot and column still rums that have been infused

with 10 natural, exotic St. Lucian fruits and spices. Enjoy the Elements Eight Spiced Rum straight or have it on the rocks with a zest of orange.

Never has a name been more apt for this handcrafted molasses based rum from St. Lucia in the Caribbean that is born from the confluence of eight vital elements which when in balance can create perfection in every sip.

1. The ideal terroir
2. Perfectly ripened cane of the highest quality.
3. Water that has been naturally filtered while flowing through underground volcanic rock formations of St. Lucia’s protected virgin rainforest.

4. Batch fermentation involving three unique chill fermented yeast strains.
5. A 3-still artisan distillation method.
6. Superlative quality lightly charred American oak bourbon barrels for the tropical ageing process.
7. Hand blending by master blenders, with no concession spared to expense.
8. And the last element of a light charcoal filtration process to remove any residual impurities.

Indeed, when nature and man work together in harmony, the result is Elements Eight.

THE REAL McCoy RUMS

The Real McCoy Rum is based on the story of Bill McCoy, the pioneer American rum runner of the Prohibition era. In January 1920, McCoy was the first to fill a boat with alcohol in the Caribbean, sail it to New York City, and legally act as a floating liquor store three miles offshore. McCoy was careful to always stay outside the three mile limit, which were international waters.

McCoy made a name for himself because he never adulterated the alcohol. While copy-cat rum runners would dilute their alcohol with wicked chemicals like turpentine, wood alcohol and prune juice, McCoy never did.

The sullied products were nicknamed ‘Booze’, ‘Hooch’ and ‘Rot Gut’ while McCoy’s quality spirits became known as ‘The Real McCoy’.

Fast forward to the 21st century. Founder



and CEO, Bailey Pryor, came up with the idea to make The Real McCoy Rum while producing a documentary film about Bill McCoy for Public Television in the United States.

During his research for the film, Bailey travelled to the Caribbean island of Barbados, where he met Richard Seale, the 4th generation Master Distiller at his family-owned distillery.

Together, Bailey and Richard developed a classic style Barbados rum, adhering to McCoy's strict regimen of never adulterating the rum with added sugars, flavours or perfumes.

As a result of hard work and determination, Bailey's documentary film went on to win as many as five Emmy Awards and Richard's rum went on to win numerous prestigious awards and devotees worldwide.

The Real McCoy Rum is represented in India by Fermentras India and is imported and sold by Lakeforest Wines.

According to Rukn Luthra, Managing



with well-balanced warmth. Perfect straight or in premium cocktails.

MOUNT GAY RUMS

Mount Gay Rum is produced by Mount Gay Distilleries Ltd. of Barbados, the eastern-most island of the West Indies. The oldest surviving deed for the company is from 1703, making Mount Gay Rum the oldest existing brand of rum in the world. The current majority shareholder of Mount Gay Distilleries (since 1989) is Rémy Cointreau and is distributed in India through Sula Selections.

Because Barbados is situated as a gateway from the Atlantic to the Caribbean, sailors from the Old World often used the island as the first resting point on their way to the New World. This meant Barbados was ideally suited for trade between the two worlds in the 18th and 19th century. Part of that trade was rum which is why the island is rightfully considered the birthplace of the rum trade

Director, Fermentras India, "The rums are aged as per the age statement given on the bottles. Real McCoy Rum is of the same quality as the finest single malt Scotch whisky, and these are made in the exact same process, with no flavours, chemicals or perfumes added....it is indeed the Real McCoy!

12 YEAR AGED SUPER PREMIUM RUM
Authentically barrel-aged for 12 full years, this rum rivals the world's finest spirits. The ideal straight rum—neat or on the rocks.

5 YEAR AGED RUM

Their flagship rum exemplifies artisan spirit



MOUNT GAY ECLIPSE

It was in 1910 that the appearance of Halley's Comet coincided with a total solar eclipse, and this event is said to have inspired Mount Gay to create their Eclipse Rum. The Eclipse is a traditional double-distilled gold rum produced from copper pot stills and aged in white Kentucky oak barrels which were previously used to age bourbon.

Mount Gay Eclipse rum has a very distinctive flavour. There are other rums made on the island, but Mount Gay is the oldest and most prominent. Quite notably, the first drink James Bond (Daniel Craig) orders in *Casino Royale* is not his trademark vodka martini but a Mount Gay Rum with soda. ☑