



CLOCKWISE FROMTOP: The Montanya distillery at Crested Butte; freshly squeezed lime goes in to prepare the perfect mojito; rum is shaken, not stirred; sliced jalapeño goes into a Teocalli Caldera Martini (photos by Nathan Bilow).



Yo ho ho!

Revel with a bottle of rum.

by KRISTY ALPERT

ILL-FATED AS THE LIQUID OF PIRATE LORE AND DRUNKEN DEBACLES, RUM HAS HISTORICALLY REMAINED OFF THE LISTS OF PREMIUM SIPPING SPIRITS AND has unfortunately maintained a reputation as an alternative to vodka or a mere means for spiking a glass of soda. Until recently...

Traditionally made by fermenting sugar cane, not since the American Revolution has rum experienced the renaissance it is seeing today. Small batch, lavishly handcrafted rums are popping up across the globe in some very unlikely places. In fact, one of the most luxurious and award-winning rums is being made far from the coast in the small mountainside town of Crested Butte, Colo., where each batch is made from a unique mix of snowmelt water and pure Hawaiian sugar cane. As passionate distillers reinstate the romance of this treasured spirit, rum is once again seducing palates and

transporting former daiquiri drinkers into the new world of refined rums.

Here are a few luxurious bottles to add to your home collection:

MONTANYA ORO RUM

The distillers behind Montanya ORO Rum are meticulous about controlling each step of the distilling process in their Crested Butte, Colo., facility. This dark spirit is distilled from high molasses content sugar cane scrupulously sourced from Hawai'i and pristine spring water from the San Juan Mountains before being laid to rest in Stranahan's oak whiskey barrels for aging. This award-winning rum boasts notes of toffee, vanilla and honey, and lingers on the tongue with a smoky, roasted coffee finish. www.montanyarum.com

BOTRAN SOLERA 1893, GRAN RESERVA

Nurturing a high-altitude, slow-aged rum is only part of the process the distillers at Botran oversee at their Guatemalan estate. From cultivating volcanic-soil-enriched sugar cane onsite to selecting virgin honey from the first press of the sugar cane, each ingredient in Botran Solera 1893 gets the white-glove treatment before aging in charred sherry and whiskey American oak barrels for up to

18 years in the mountaintops of Guatemala. This rum elegantly blends hints of vanilla, caramelized bananas, toffee, toasted wood and nutmeg. www.botranrums.com

BRUGAL 1888

Twice distilled and aged six to eight years in American oak barrels and two to four years in Spanish oak sherry casks, Brugal 1888 is the crème of the crop of Don Andrés Brugal's premium Dominican Republic spirits. Named after the founding year of the company, a fifth generation of distillers oversee the handcrafted production of this decadent dark rum that offers toasty yet sweet notes of butterscotch, honey, salted butter and chocolate with a delicate smoky finish. www.brugal.es

SEVEN FATHOM'S RUM

On an island that prides itself on imports, Seven Fathom's craft distillers have created a truly unique Cayman Island product that brings the term handcrafted to new depths. This small batch, golden brown rum is first distilled from fermented molasses before aging in oak barrels located seven fathoms beneath the sea in underwater caves. The constant push and pull of the tides massages the rum and give it an intriguing profile with oaky notes of vanilla and caramel. www.sevenfathomsrum.com. ■

