

RUM-BAR REVOLUTION

BY ZACH STOVALL

The Caribbean's favorite spirit, much like its people, comes in many colors, flavors and claims of virility. Though most every bar between Bermuda and Bonaire serves rum, few like those below take pride enough to specialize in it.



LE ZANDOLI, MARTINIQUE

A red plastic giraffe sporting an afro wig greets guests at the funky La Suite Villa. Big on character, its tiny house bar has a long list of rums, including local favorites as well as labels Habitation St. Etienne and Cuvée Spéciale de La Flibuste, found only in Martinique. Requests to ride the red giraffe go unacknowledged.

PAPA ZOUK FISH 'N' RUM, ANTIGUA

An unassuming clapboard cottage adorned with straw lamps and madras tablecloths near Antigua's capital, Papa Zouk's was recently ravaged by a fire that left hundreds of prized labels torched. Surviving bottles, charred black, were combined in a single drum and dubbed Fire Rum. The one-of-a-kind libation hugs a shelf in the rebuilt West Indian rum shack with a growing collection of replacements capable of setting sobriety ablaze.



CANE BAR, ST. LUCIA

Putting a spin on the sommelier, a "rummelier" at Viceroy Sugar Beach's sleek Cane Bar steers guests through tough decision trees such as choosing Ron Zacapa XO Centenario Solera Gran Reserva Especial versus Clément Rhum Vieux XO, whether to have a stick of freshly sliced sugar cane alongside, and whether a slip of the vernacular is necessary when ordering a sixth round.

PETER JOHN SUGAR CANE RUM BAR, ST. LUCIA

Don't expect rare or expensive labels from the all-inclusive rum bar at Coconut Bay Beach Resort. The list profiles 30 rums of the greater Caribbean, including Angostura 1919 and El Dorado 12, a far better offering than most all-incs. Moreover, enjoy sampling them for free. And for Captain Morgan's sake, don't mix them with Coke.

JOHN MOORE BAR, BARBADOS

Barbados is a huge rum producer, and no place is more authentic to enjoy its bounty than a no-frills Bajan rum shop amid games of dominoes and a crackly radio belting soca music. No fancy labels here; only cheap ones. Locals order flasks. Tourists order shots. You know what to do to fit in.

