

THE RUM PROCESS

Angostura has been in the rum business for over 100 years following the same traditional method for making rum that has been used for centuries. The machinery and technology may have evolved, but the basic process has remained the same.

The Basics...

There are four major processes involved in making rum: fermentation, distillation, ageing and blending. The basic principles of rum making are quite simple and use three ingredients - sugar cane, water and yeast. The juice of the mature sugar cane plant or molasses is used as the raw material for the fermentation process. The addition of yeast and sugar creates a spontaneous reaction which produces the alcohol and a range of by-products – called congeners - that give rum its unique aroma and flavour. Distilling separates the alcohol and congeners from the fermented mixture and concentrates them to make the actual rum. Distilling equipment and practice varies from place to place which produces rums of different characters. Rum is aged in oak barrels and ultimately blended to produce the spirit we know as rum.

In more detail...

Molasses:

Molasses is the most widely used raw material for rum production. Angostura only uses molasses. The style of molasses varies and depends on the quality of the cane, soil, climatic conditions, method of harvesting, manufacturing process for sugar and handling and storage. The quality is what contributes to the taste and intensity of the rum.

Yeast used in fermentation:

Angostura has used the same unique yeast strain for more than sixty years. The yeast is key to the fermentation process as it is the signature to any alcohol and can influence the ultimate taste and flavour of the rum.

Fermentation:

Molasses is diluted with water to reduce the sugar content and the pure yeast culture is added to the mixture. The fermentation process takes approximately 36 – 48hrs hours to produce the alcohol, the rich base for all Angostura rums.

Distillation:

Distillation is the process of boiling the liquid after fermentation and condensing its vapour to produce the alcohol that is then collected. The plant uses a multi-column, multi-tray, continuous distillation system to separate and concentrate the alcohol and congener components of the liquid mixture. The unique configuration and design of the columns at Angostura compared to many other distillers allow the company to produce finer, more delicately balanced rums.

Ageing:

After distillation, the rum is stored in 40 gallon oak barrels and moved to the warehouse for ageing. Angostura ages all of its rum for the minimum time stated on the label.

Although the ageing process is not fully understood, it is considered to be the most significant aspect of the rum manufacturing process because the rum improves with age.

Rum ageing has been practiced since the 1600's when seafarers found that as rum was carried on long journeys in wooden barrels it improved even more and it also became darker in colour. During ageing many changes occur as a result of the oxidation and selective diffusion through the pores of the oak barrel and the chemical interaction between the congeners. Today all the ageing of rum is done in oak wood barrels that were previously used, predominantly for bourbon with some used for sherry.

Blending:

Blending is the secret of fine rum. It allows the master blender to use many different types and styles of rum to create a particular blend. The skill of blending involves mixing light and heavy rums of different ages that have been carefully analysed and selected by the blender for their specific characteristics.

After the rum is blended it is stored in bottling vats and reduced to bottling strength by the addition of deionised water. It is then passed through filters and polishers before being bottled and packaged for sale. The end results are exceptionally smooth aged rums with notes of vanilla and wood.

Angostura Limited

Angostura ferments, distills, ages and blends its rums on the island of Trinidad in the West Indies. Angostura started with a still which was capable of producing 5400 litres of alcohol per day, today's production capacity is over 65,000 litres per day. There are six ageing warehouses with a total capacity of 80,000 casks. Angostura produces over 600,000 cases of rum each year, most of which are exported to the US, UK, Europe and the rest of the Caribbean.

Rum is a spirit drink -

- obtained exclusively by alcoholic fermentation and distillation of sugar cane molasses, sugar cane syrups, sugar cane juices or cane sugar produced during the processing of sugar cane
 - distilled at an alcohol content of less than 96.0 percent alcohol by volume at 20 degrees Celsius
 - produced in such a way that the product has the organoleptic characteristics derived from the natural volatile elements contained in the above raw materials or formed during the fermentation or distillation process of the named raw materials.
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