



Rum Producers Upgrade Ageing Practices

- *This initiative is part of a CARIFORUM project funded by the European Union within the context of their support for the Caribbean Economic Partnership Agreement and implemented by the West Indies Rum & Spirits Producers Association (WIRSPA).*
- *Training workshop is aimed at upgrading ability of producers to maintain their stock of rum ageing barrels.*
- *Initiative underscores maintenance of age old traditions and commitment to producing premium quality Authentic Caribbean Rums.*

March 2015 Coopers from several smaller Caribbean distilleries recently spent an intensive week's training at Angostura Distillery in Trinidad learning to repair and maintain the wooden barrels in which rum is placed to age and mature.

Premium Authentic Caribbean Rums are aged in oak barrels and keeping them leak free is a challenge. This is where Coopers come into the picture – using age old techniques passed down over the years, Coopers use their skills and mostly hand tools to keep barrels of ageing rum from leaking away.

The training session was an initiative of the West Indies Rum & Spirits Producers' Association, in collaboration with Angostura. It is one of many knowledge exchange activities funded through a CARIFORUM project funded by the European Union under their support for the Caribbean Economic Partnership Agreement. The project is aimed at strengthening the industry so as to better enable it to compete in international markets.

“Ageing of our rums in wooden barrels is a core part of producing our quality Authentic Caribbean Rums”, says Frank Ward, Chairman of WIRSPA. “At the same time, it is an expensive process as we lose significant amounts each year to evaporation and sometimes leakage. This initiative will provide practical training to the smaller distilleries in the WIRSPA family on how to reduce these losses and extend the life of their barrel stock. It's in the barrel that our unique flavours develop and our Coopers have an immense responsibility in making this happen.”

The workshop was preceded by a WIRSPA webinar held with John Niehoff of Brown Forman Corporation, the largest supplier of oak barrels to the spirits industry and



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addressed the current state of the market for barrels and best practice in barrel management.

According to Ward, “these efforts better enable us to position ourselves as aged premium quality rums in a highly competitive international market dominated by drinks giants. It is a key part of our effort to develop the Authentic Caribbean Rum Marque as a symbol of provenance and quality for our rums. “

End

Images supplied:

ACR Marque; Barrels; Group Shot

The West Indies Rum & Spirits Producers Association implements the European Union¹ funded CARIFORUM Rum Sector Support Project on behalf of CARIFORUM.

The Authentic Caribbean Rum (ACR) Marque was developed as a symbol of authenticity, provenance and quality for rums within the WIRSPA family. As usage of the Marque grows it will act as a visual symbol to help trade customers and consumers identify ACR brands, but in the short-term it will be used to promote the development of Authentic Caribbean Rum as a distinct sector within the drinks industry. For more information visit www.wirspa.com ; www.acr-rum.com or contact wirspa@wirspa.com.

¹ European Commission is the EU's executive body.

“The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders”.



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