

# NAVY RUM: THE ECCNO TASTING

- Scarlet Ibis (Trinidad, 49%)
- Mount Gay Eclipse Navy Strength (Barbados, 57.1%)
- Smith & Cross (Jamaica, 57%)
- Pusser's Gunpowder Proof (Guyana, 57%)
- Hamilton 114 Navy Strength (Jamaica, Guyana, 57%)
- Hamilton Beachbum Berry's Navy Grog Blend (Jam, Guy, Bar, Dominican, 57%)
- Hamilton Beachbum Berry's Zombie Blend (Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad, 59%)
- Black Tot Finest Caribbean (Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados, 46.2%)
- Planteray OFTD (Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados, 69%)
- Planteray Mister Fogg (Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados, Trinidad, 55.7%)
- Black Tot Master Distiller 2022 (Jam, Guy, Bar, Tri, Australia, 54.5%)
- ECCNO Blends (Varied)



# UP SPIRITS!!

Stand fast the Holy Ghost!

AP

## NAVY'S GREATEST FORTIFICATION

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No reduction in rum, says  
the man who goes down  
to the sea in sips

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*British Movietone News*



# THREE CONCERNS OF SAILING SHIPS

- Preservation or spoilage of provisions: Beer spoiled on long voyages – hence the decision to provision with spirits like rum, arrack, gin and brandy instead of beer.
- Fire: Fire is the greatest danger on a floating city made of wood and full of gunpowder. Rum at or above proof is flammable and, if aerosolized, can be explosive.
- Storage space: The lower the ABV, the greater the amount of space required to store the same amount of alcohol. In addition to the spoilage issue, beer required far more space in the hold than rum, arrack or brandy.
- Solution: the best compromise to address the above concerns is a spirit that is at the highest possible ABV while remaining under proof so that it is not flammable – no spoilage, no fire hazard, and the minimum amount of space required.



# ROYAL NAVY RUM: A PRE-HISTORY

- 1590 (earliest record), a sailor's ration of alcoholic beverage was originally beer with a daily ration of one gallon (i.e. eight pints). When beer was not available, as it would often spoil easily, it could be substituted by a pint of wine or half a pint of spirits depending on what was locally available.
- In 1655, the difficulty in storing the large quantities of liquid required led to beer's complete replacement with spirits, with the political influence of the West Indian planters giving rum preference over arrack and other spirits.
  - The half-pint of spirits was originally issued neat; it is \*said\* that sailors would "prove" its strength by checking that gunpowder doused with rum would still burn (thus verifying that rum was at least 57% ABV). This is almost certainly false, because no captain would have wanted a flammable spirit on board.



# ROYAL NAVY RUM: THE EARLY YEARS

UPON Consideration by Us had as well of your Report in your Letter of th<sup>e</sup> 3<sup>d</sup> of February last to Our Secretary of th<sup>e</sup> Adm<sup>ty</sup> as of the Debates had thereon th<sup>e</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> instant before Us at Our Tre<sup>'</sup>ary Chambers, yourselves attending touching a Proposition lately made to Us by Mr. Waterhouse a Merch<sup>t</sup> for th<sup>e</sup> Supplying Our Ships, which doe now, or shall hereafter attend upon the Service of Our Island of Jamaica with Rumm instead of Brandy; These are to signifie to you Our Approval of what is soe proposed, and assented to by you therein, & to authorize and direct you to see the same in the manner proposed in your Aforesaid Letter, (and at as cheape Rates as may be) put in Execution till you receive Our further Orders; Takeing Care, that th<sup>e</sup> good or ill-Effects of this proof, with respect as well to th<sup>e</sup> good Husbandry thereof, as th<sup>e</sup> Health and Satisfaction of Our Seamen be carefully enquired into by you, & reported to Us within a Yeare or two (or sooner if you find it necessary for Our Further Satisfaction in the same.

For &c<sup>a</sup>. Given at Our Court at Whitehall this 9th March, 1687/8.

By his Mat<sup>s</sup> Comand,

S: PEPYS.

1650 – first recorded  
mention of rum (Barbados)

1655 – earliest cited  
issuance of rum to British  
sailors

1687 – Rum okayed as  
substitute for brandy



# 1731

In case it shall be thought for the Service to alter any of the foregoing Particulars of Provisions in Ships employed on Foreign Voyages, it is to be observed, that a Pint of Wine, or Half a Pint of Brandy, Rum, or Arrack, hold Proportion to a Gallon of Beer; four

# 1740

“ By Edward Vernon, Esq., Vice-Admiral of the Blue, and Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the West Indies.

“ Whereas it manifestly appears by the return made to my general order of the 4th of August, to be the unanimous opinion of both Captains and Surgeons that the pernicious custom of the seamen drinking their allowance of rum in drams, and often at once, is attended with many fatal effects to their morals as well as their health, which are visibly impaired thereby, and many of their lives shortened by it, besides the ill consequences arising from stupifying their rational qualities which makes them heedlessly slaves to every brutish passion, and which having their unanimous opinion cannot be better remedied than by the ordering their half pint of rum to be daily mixed with a quart of water, which they that are good husbands may from the savings of their salt provisions and bread

## THE DAILY RATION

- 1731 - The value of rum and wine as long-keeping commodities is recognized by the Navy Board. Rum becomes an official issue on foreign stations when beer is not available.
- Twice daily! What could go wrong?
- 1740 – Admiral Vernon (known as Old Grog, because of his habitual program cloak) orders the rum ration diluted to inhibit drunkenness.



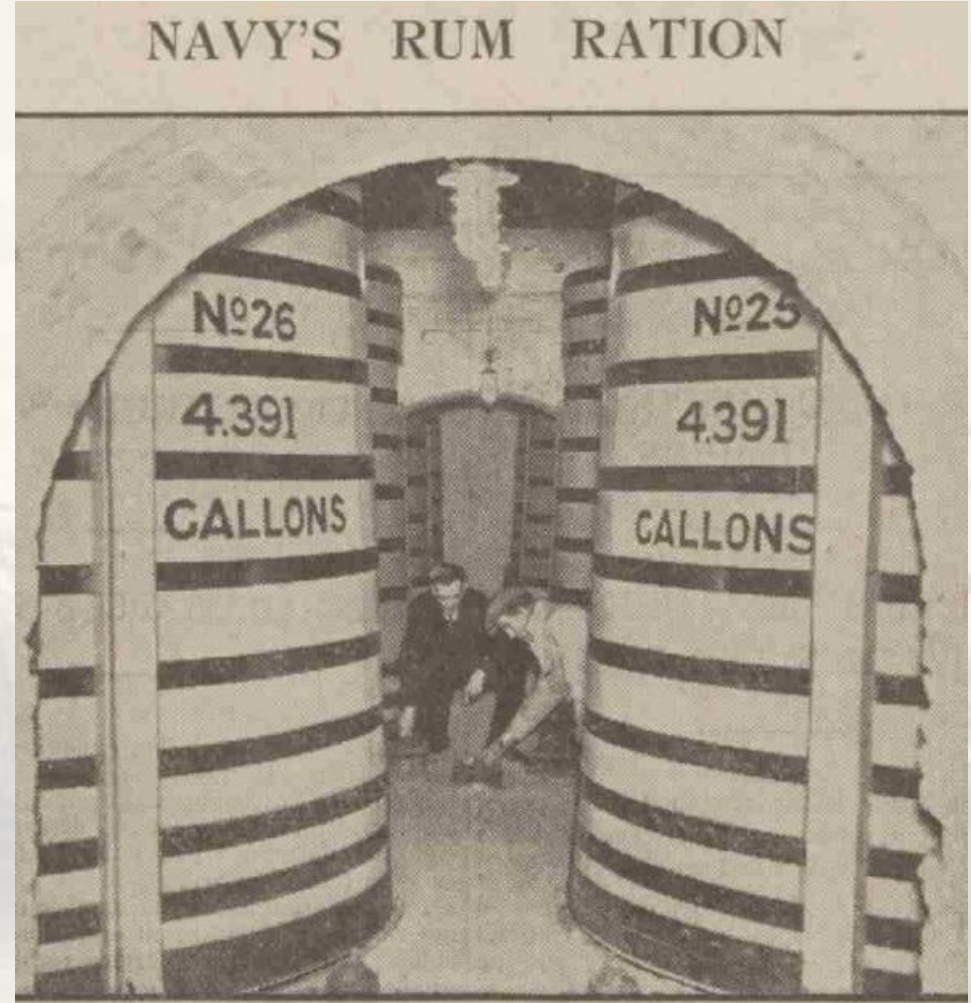
- By 1756, the ration quantity had doubled to a full pint, and spread to all sailors of legal age, not just those in foreign waters
- 1783: British navy enlistment totaled 107,000 men. At a pint per day per man, at least 3,000,000 gallons of rum were required to fulfill victualling requirements for the year.
- By the late 1700s the navy's victualling board was directing rum purchases and sending rum stores to the central victualling yards for blending. One such yard, at the start of the 1800s, was the Deptford Victualling Yard
- 1797, May 19th: The first known record of the term "Splice the Main Brace" – a difficult task, this earned a reward of an extra ration – the phrase then became a euphemism for an extra ration for the crew as a whole.
- 1866: The issuing strength of rum is regulated at 4.5% under Proof.
- 1881: The issue of spirits to crew under age 21 is discontinued. ☹️



# DEPTFORD VICTUALLING YARD

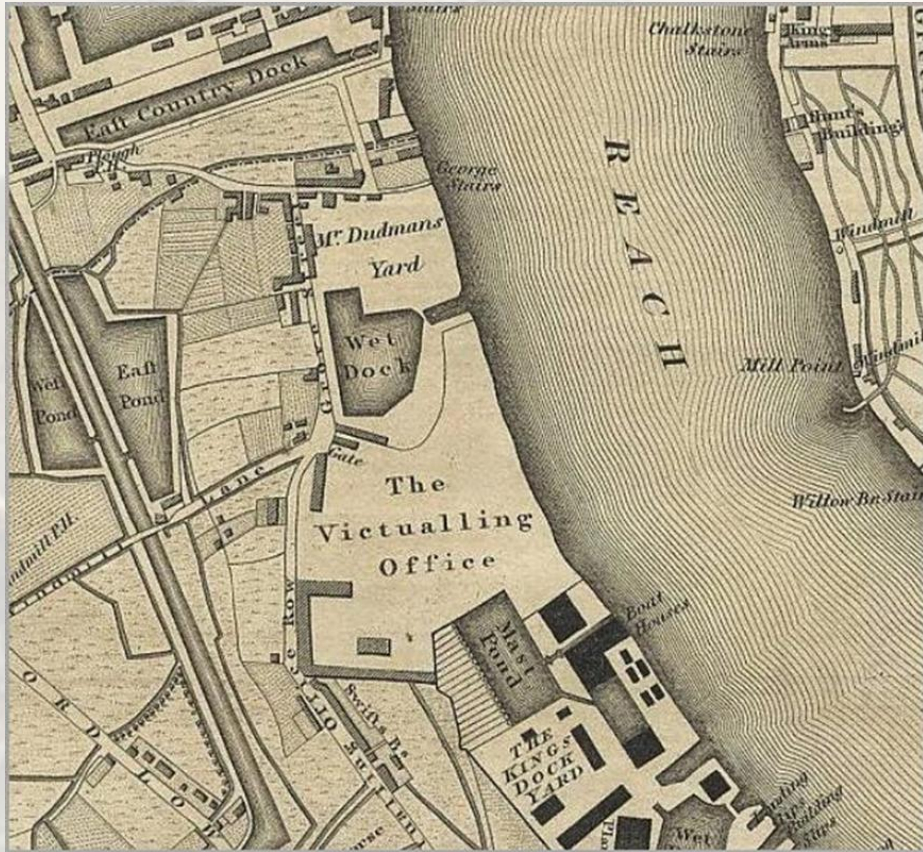
The whole of the rum issued comes from the West Indies, and is bought from samples while lying in bond at the docks. It is then conveyed to Deptford, where it is started into huge vats, varying in capacity from 4,600 gallons to upwards of 32,000. During the process of starting, the rum, which when received is 40 per cent. over proof, is reduced to issuing strength, *i.e.* 4.5 under proof, and drawn off as required into various sized casks for issue to H.M. ships and depôts at home and abroad.

Not long ago it became necessary to empty one of the largest vats for examination, for the first time for many years, and the process exploded a popular and pleasing tradition that years ago a pet dog had mysteriously disappeared, having last been seen at the brink of the vat. and that to his too





# DEPTFORD VICTUALLING YARD





# BLENDING THE NAVY'S RUM



## Navy Rum Origins

- Barbados (earliest documented mention of rum in 1650), the leading rum producer among British colonies in the late 1600s, was only a modest producer of rum by the 1800s.
- Jamaica's rum industry rose to prominence in the 1700s and for many years was the highest volume supplier of rum to Great Britain. Jamaica's early success tied it to the pot still; people consequently came to expect a hearty flavor profile from Jamaican rum, but at greater expense (think about the effect on government contracts).
- Trinidad and Guyana, previously colonized by Spain and Holland, respectively, did not become British Colonies until 1797 and 1796, respectively. Both had already adopted column distillation. By the mid 1800s, Guyana exported more rum than Jamaica. Similarly, Trinidad's rum production grew substantially in the early 1900s, earning itself a place in the navy rum blend.
- The major sources of navy rum changed greatly over time. Barbados, the main supplier in the mid 1600s, was eclipsed by Jamaica in the 1700s and then Guyana in the late 1800s, around the same time that Trinidad became an important component. By the late 1800s, heavier Jamaican rum was disfavored and Guyana and Trinidad provided the bulk of British navy rum.
- But by the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, things had changed again:
  - "London Dock rum is simply Jamaica or Demerara aged in London. Myers's Rum, Lemon Hart Jamaica, Bellows London Dock, and Booker's Demerara are good examples of these heavy West Indian rums." – Harper's Bazaar, 1939
- We should note, however, that the Royal Navy contracted to purchase rum from virtually all of its sugar-producing colonies at one time or another (especially in the mid-1800s), including in its ever-changing lineup Australia, Antigua, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Montserrat, Nevis, Mauritius, Natal, India and Sri Lanka, among others.
- A note from the Navy's 1939 Manual of Victualling: "Navy Rum ... consists of a blend of West Indian (mainly Demerara and Trinidad) with proportions of Natal and Mauritius Rums. Jamaica rum is rarely purchased, as owing to its characteristic aromatic flavour, its use would have a marked effect on the flavour of the blend to which the Fleet has now become accustomed."
- In 1944, under pressure from the war, with Trinidad and Guyana unable to keep up with demand, the British navy even sourced rum from Cuba and Martinique. What else was Martinique rum used for in 1944? Think about the flavor profile that would have been expected by the British navy as a substitute for Guyanese rum....



VICTUALLING-OFFICE, May 28, 1807.

**T**HE Commissioners for Victualling his Majesty's Navy do hereby give Notice, that on THURSDAY, the 18th of June next, they will be ready to receive tenders in writing (sealed up) and treat for THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND GALLONS of WEST INDIA RUM, or of FOREIGN BRANDY, to be delivered, One Half in the space of One Month, and the remainder in One Month afterwards, into his Majesty's Victualling Stores at Deptford, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, in the following proportions, viz.

Deptford .....	200,000	Gallons
Portsmouth, .....	40,000	
Plymouth .....	60,000	————— 300,000

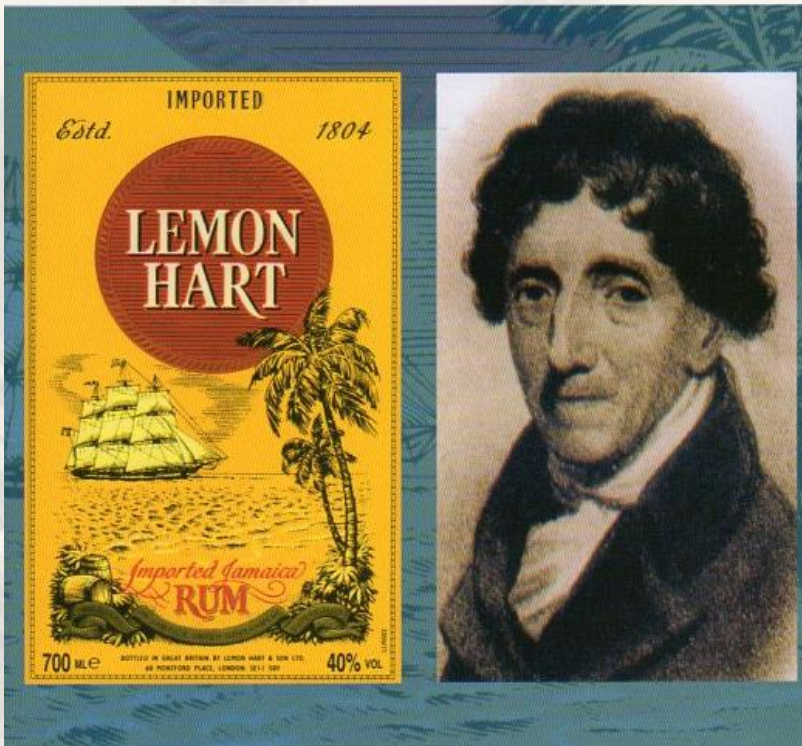
# INCEPTION OF THE ROYAL NAVY BLEND

~ 1804



# NAVY RUM SUPPLIERS: FAMILIAR NAMES

The contract for rums tendered for on Thursday week has been taken to the extent of 287,000 gallons (the largest quantity ever taken at one time), by the following firms:—Ruck, Fenwick, and Ruck; Leman, Hart, and Sons; Richard Simons; Thomas Lowndes and Co.; James Brothers and Co.; Howe and Sons; Henry White and Co.; and Alfred Lamb. This contract follows closely upon the last contract, on the 28th of April, when the Government took 120,000 gallons.



The contract for rum for the navy, to be delivered at Deptford, was taken by Messrs. Lemon, Hart, and Son, of Fenchurch-street, on the 19th instant; and the contract for rum, also for the navy, to be delivered at Gosport, was taken on the 16th instant by the same firm.

**Brown of Deptford Dockyard.**

RUM. — The Government contract for rum has been taken by Messrs. L. Hart & Son, 37,000 gallon; Messrs. T. Lowndes & Co., 28,000 gallons; Messrs. H. White & Co., 10,000 gallons.



## 27. Rum.

Navy Rum is purchased in the open market upon sample. It consists of a blend of West Indian (mainly Demerara and Trinidad) with proportions of Natal and Mauritius Rums. Jamaica rum is rarely purchased, as owing to its characteristic aromatic flavour, its use would have a marked effect on the flavour of the blend to which the Fleet has now become accustomed. The average strength on delivery is 40° over proof, and the issuing strength is 4·5 under proof. This latter strength was fixed on the 19th February, 1866.

1939 Manual of Victualling

**WAS THERE A NAVY RUM RECIPE?**



Sir,

I am commanded by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to refer <sup>me</sup> to Colonial Office letter dated 17th July 1925, No. 29331 <sup>Jica</sup> covering a copy of a letter from Mr. W. Cradwick, Commissioner, Jamaica Section, British Empire Exhibition, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, concerning the use of Jamaica Rum in H.M. Navy, and to state for the information of the Secretary of State that [the high quality of Jamaica Rum is recognised by Their Lordships, but that its distinctive quality and flavour, which gain for it so high a place in the estimation of the general public, rather militate against its use in the Navy for two reasons, first ~~is~~ because it can usually command a higher price than other Rums owing to those distinctive properties, and secondly, because the Navy is accustomed to and prefers a Blend which does not possess the characteristic flavour of Jamaica Rum,

Their Lordships therefore do not consider that they would be justified in paying a higher price in order to obtain Jamaica Rum, and can only purchase such Rum on the rare occasions when parcels in which the characteristic flavour of Jamaica Rum is not pronounced are offered at prices not exceeding those at which other suitable Rums are available, e.g., Trinidad and Demerara Rums.]

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,

**JAMAICAN  
RUM NOT  
WANTED!**



# SPECIFIC NAVY BLENDS

- 1944: Guyana, Trinidad, Barbados, Martinique, Cuba, Jamaica, Natal, Mauritius
- 1956: Guyana (60%), Trinidad, Barbados, South Africa, Australia
- 1962: Guyana (>60%, mostly pot still), Trinidad (~33%), Barbados (~6%) and doses of “Natal strong rum” and “Australian strong rum”
- 1966: Same as 1962, but 60%, 30% and 10% (Barbados and Australia)







- Proof strength: 57.15% ABV
- Navy strength: “4.5 degrees under proof”
- $57.15 \times 0.955 = \sim 54.5\%$
- Navy strength:  $\sim 54.5\%$  ABV

**PROOF SPIRIT  $\neq$   
NAVY STRENGTH**



## **Navy Rum Production**

- Rum Quay, built in 1802 at the West India Docks, was ground zero for aging rum in London until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.
- The rum was almost exclusively distilled in the British colonies of the time, mostly from the Caribbean, with Jamaican and Demerara rum finding particular favor.
- The rum was usually young upon arrival. After distillation in the colonies, it was often casked and shipped out relatively soon thereafter. Some rum casks at Rum Quay aged for decades.
- Marketed as “London Dock rum” by the late 1800s, rum aged at Rum Quay developed a reputation as the highest quality rum to be found.
- “I urge you to try 15, 17 and 20-year-old unadulterated\* London Dock rum. It is unequaled.” – Victor Bergeron, 1968

\* “Unadulterated,” in the professional parlance of the time, meant simply that the rum had not been “stretched” by blending with cheaper, inferior rum



## Navy Rum Characteristics

- The rum benefitted from **dynamic aging** at sea - the movement in the barrel, the humidity, and the ambient temperature at sea gave the rum a specific and hard to replicate taste profile.
- **Continental aging** on the Thames was typified by cooler temperatures, high humidity, and lower angel's share (mainly composed of alcohol) than with Caribbean aging.
- **Vatting**: prior to removal, rum was further aged and blended in open wooden vats stirred with a wooden paddle, before being bottled or re-casked for export. Imagine the effects of evaporation of open the open vats on the rum – the lightest materials evaporate more easily, leaving a heavier rum.
- A substantial amount of **caramel** was used. From the 1939 Manual of Victualing: “The colour [of Navy Rum], which is due merely to the presence of caramel (i.e., burnt sugar) in the spirit, should be dark brown, this being preferred by the men, although the depth of colour is no criterion of quality.”



## **The Fall of London Dock rum**

- 1933: Oh the humanity - Rum Quay destroyed by fire
- 1940: Twice. Rum moves upstream to the London Docks
- 1950s: Rise of container shipping
- 1961: Deptford Victualling Yard closes
- 1962: Jamaican independence
- 1963 Trinidad independence
- 1966: Guyanese independence
- 1970: Royal Navy abolishes the daily rum ration (final tot served on board on July 31, 1970).



# MISTER FOGG



## SOLERA VATTING

“The rum is started into the vats which are all connected one with the other, although any one or more can be shut off, with such a quantity of water as will, it is estimated, reduce it as nearly as possible to issuing strength (4.5 under Proof) but as it would be difficult to hit off this strength precisely in all the 32 vats, two of them...are appropriated as issuing vats in which the spirit is always kept at the precise issuing strength.”

- Sheffield Weekly Telegraph, November 3, 1900

**Q: Why is Mister Fogg bottled at 55.7% ABV when we have seen that the issuing strength of British Navy rum was 54.5% ABV?**

A: “The addition of caramel to the rum affects the specific gravity, and the reading obtained with a hydrometer will be higher in the coloured rum than it would have been in an uncoloured spirit. In Navy rum, although the issuing strength as ascertained by the hydrometer appears from the tables to be 4.5 under proof the actual alcoholic strength is about 2.5 under proof. The difference between the actual and the observed strengths is known as obscuration (in the above case it is 2).”

- 1939 Victualling Manual



# ECCNO DIY NAVY BLENDS



# ERIC LEEFE, SCIENTIST

9/4 Blend - 3					
Origin	Label	ABV	Qty (oz)	% Blend	% Blend Origin
Guyana	Hamilton 151	75.5%	0.75	16.3%	
	Hamilton 86	43.0%	1.25	27.2%	43.5%
Barbados	Plantation 5	40.0%			
	Mt Gay Eclipse	40.0%			
	Mt Gay Eclipse Navy	57.1%	1.25	27.2%	
	Mt Gay Black Barrel	43.0%	0.25	5.4%	
	Doorly's XO	43.0%			32.6%
Trinidad	Angostura 1919	40.0%			
	Scarlet Ibis	49.0%			0.0%
Jamaica	Smith & Cross	57.0%	1	21.7%	
	Hampden 8	46.0%			
	Hampden HLCF	60.0%			
	W&N OP	63.0%			
	Transcontinental WP 2013	56.8%			21.7%
	PX Sherry	17.0%	0.1	2.2%	2.2%
	Water	0.0%			0.0%
Blend ABV:		54.6%	4.60		

11/6 Blend					
Origin	Label	ABV	Qty (oz)	% Blend	% Blend Origin
Guyana	Hamilton 151	75.5%	1	19.6%	
	Hamilton 86	43.0%			
	El Dorado 12	40.0%	1	19.6%	39.2%
Barbados	Plantation 5	40.0%			
	Mt Gay Eclipse	40.0%			
	Stade's No 8	43.0%	0.75	14.7%	
	Mt Gay Eclipse Navy	57.1%	0.75	14.7%	
	Mt Gay Black Barrel	43.0%			
	Doorly's XO	43.0%			29.4%
Trinidad	Angostura 1919	40.0%			
	Scarlet Ibis	49.0%			0.0%
Jamaica	Smith & Cross	57.0%	1	19.6%	
	Hampden 8	46.0%			
	Hampden HLCF	60.0%			
	Appleton Signature	40.0%			
	WP OP	63.0%	0.5	9.8%	
	W&N OP	63.0%			
	Transcontinental WP 2013	56.8%			29.4%
	PX Sherry	17.0%	0.1	2.0%	2.0%
	Water	0.0%			0.0%
Blend ABV:		55.1%	5.10		



Eric's sophisticated vating technique



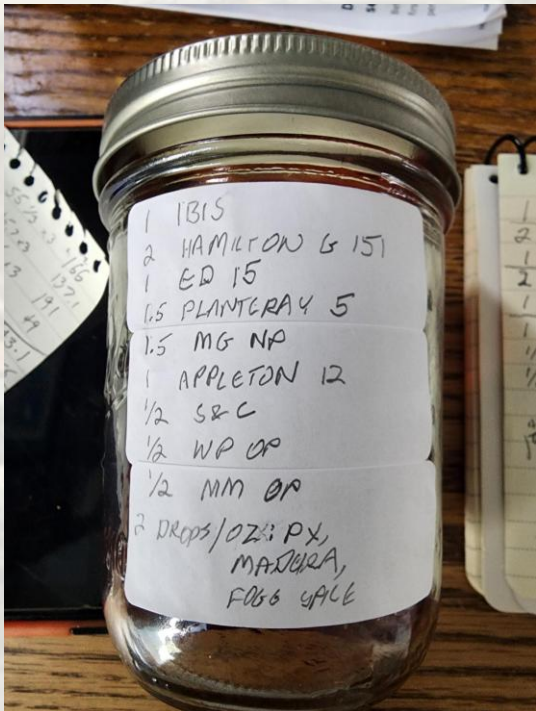
# STEPHEN FRANCIS, RUM SLOB



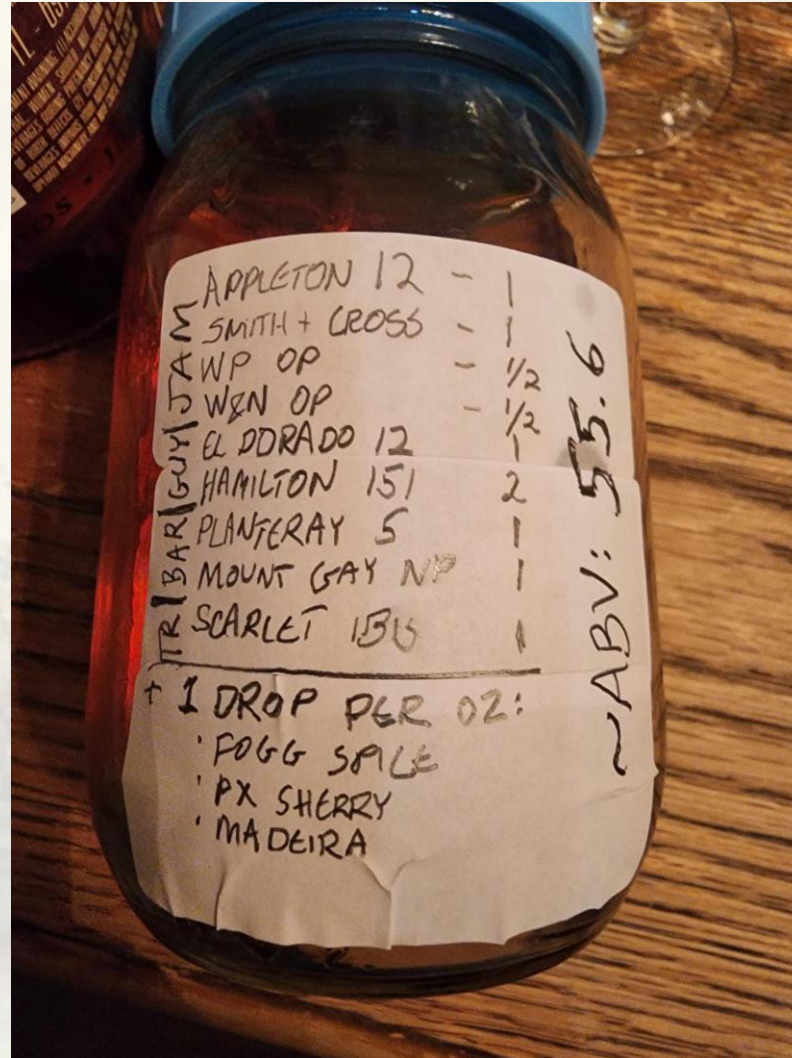
The easy B- recipes



The harder B+ recipe



Jenny's favorite blend



Closest to Fogg



Stephen's "spreadsheet"

7 drops spices, 14 madeira	
1/2 MM	63
1/2 H 151	75.5
2/4 1815	49
1/2 STADES	43
1/2 MG NP	57
MG NP	76.25
STADES	64.5
1815	110.25
H 151	84.935
MM	15.25
	346.685
	56.375
	54.38