

*“I recommend enjoying this impressive rum
neat”*

Aged Rum: Sweet Nectar You Should Be Sipping

These are rums worth spending your money on.

When it comes to alcoholic beverages, I'm a wine guy first and foremost, then a Scotch & bourbon guy. Until recently if someone mentioned rum and didn't say Coke right after it or mention mojito's, I wasn't quite sure what they were getting at. But then aged rum started hitting my periphery. One reason was some friends who enjoyed and extolled its virtues and another was my love of Single Malt Scotch. Over the last couple of years it became clear to me that some of my favorite expressions of Scotch were ones that were finished in more than one type of cask. Among those is The Balvenie 14 Year Old Caribbean Cask. It's aged for 12 years in whiskey barrels and then spends the last two years aging in ex- rum casks. Thus the desire to sample more aged rums increased. The more examples I tried it became clear how distinct they could be from one another as well as what a world apart they are from the typical rums used as mixers. The next step was obvious; I needed to sample numerous aged rums side by side to see the real differences. Over the last couple of weeks I have tried more than four dozen different rums from a host of producers. I tasted each one several times. My glass of choice was a brandy snifter and I sampled each rum both neat and with a single ice cube. Some of the rums work better with ice while most were better neat. Of the many examples of rum I tasted, those listed below are the ones I recommend you spend your money on.

Here's why:

Kaniché Réserve — It was distilled and aged in bourbon casks in Barbados. Kaniché was then transported to the Cognac Ferrand estate in France, where it was finished in ex-Cognac casks. This rum sells for right around \$18. Caramel and papaya aromas fill the nose here. Spices carry the day through the palate along with hints of crème brûlée and macadamia nut. It has a nice finish with vanilla bean and bits of clove. At under \$20 this is an outstanding value. For this price you won't mind making cocktails with it, but it's worthy of being sipped neat.

Plantation XO 20th Anniversary — This offering is made by combining some of the company's oldest reserved rums from Barbados. After blending, they allow the married rum to age for another 12 to 18 months in oak casks in France. It has a suggested retail price of \$39.99. In the glass it has a deep, dark hue that brings to mind double-brewed tea. The nose is off the charts with bits of toasty oak, vanilla bean galore, and spices to spare. The palate is generous and powerfully layered with a bevy of precise and complex fruit and spices. Dates, coconuts, and mountain fig are all present and accounted for along with a hint of anise and toasted pecan. The prodigious finish brings to mind Fig Newtons dipped in dark chocolate. A hint of Seville orange provides a final distinct note. I recommend enjoying this impressive rum neat.

