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The History of Martiniquan Rum

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Abstract

Both cotton and tobacco were cultivated in Martinique before sugar cane was brought into this island around 1650. However, the Dutch of Jewish ancestry who were expelled from the northern-eastern region of Brazil by the Portuguese, came to Martinique. They shared their knowledge on the making process of the sugar. By the late seventeenth century, sugar cane "overthrew" the two previous crops: cotton and tobacco. In 1694, Father Labat, a French Catholic missionary, farmer, writer and traveler made his way to Martinique where he lived for many years. He brought with him new techniques of distillation of sugar and founded the Fonds-Saint-Jacques sugar plantation around 1696.

The Martiniquan sugar industry reached its pinnacle during the eighteenth century. Owing to the great fall of the sugar exports and the planters' incomes, the sugar industry was no longer prosperous as it used to be. Despite of this decline, distilleries are still producing the "Rhum industriel" and the "Rhum agricole".

Keywords: sugar, rum, rhum industriel, rhum agricole

Introduction

In 1635, the first wave of French colonizers settled in Martinique where they started to cultivate cotton and tobacco. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, they gradually turned to sugar cane because it was much more profitable. The Martiniquan sugar industry reached its pinnacle during the eighteenth century. A large number of sugar factories emerged between 1685 and 1717. In 1765, the Saint-James sugar factory was established in the town of Saint-Pierre where a high quality of sugar cane alcohol was produced. By 1767, there were 450 sugar factories in Martinique. The end of the nineteenth century witnessed a major drop in sugar exports due to the high taxes that were imposed upon the planters and the end of slavery in 1848. As result, the sugar industry became precarious. This article seeks to explore the history of the sugar and rum industry. It examines the making process of two popular types of rums called "Rhum industriel" (rum made of molasses) and "Rhum agricole" (rum made from sugar cane juice) as well as the use of rum in the culinary area.

The sugar cane era

Sugar cane also known as Saccharum Officinarium hails from Oceania. It belongs to the Poacea family (aka Gramineae). During his second trip to the Americas, Christopher Columbus brought a cutting of sugar cane with him and introduced it to Saint-Domingue. This was the way the cultivation of sugar cane spread to Cuba, Puerto Rico and the rest of the Caribbean (Alibert, 7). As said earlier, the Dutch of Jewish ancestry arrived in Martinique in their vessels transporting sugar mills and other sugar equipment, but above all they shared their experiences and manufacturing secrets with the French settlers.

Meide (2003, 8) shed some light upon the plantation process of sugar cane in the colonial period: "Cane was planted 16 to 18th month before harvesting. Timing was critically important at any stage of the sugar cane production process, and planting and harvesting needed to coincide with rainy (May, June, through December/January) and dry seasons". Sugar cane was taking over a year to ripe. But if it was underripe or overippe, the sugar quality was affected. Similar sugar cane methods were adopted by both the British and the French. The slaves dug five-foot square holes in the soil to keep it moist and protect it from erosion. They also covered the cane shoots with 2 inches of soil. Meide argues that the slaves resorted to dung and mold to fill up the holes. The plants were weeded and trimmed for the following weeks. In general, the harvest took 16 or 18 months after the cane was planted. The full height of a mature cane reached 8 feet.

According to Alibert (2012, 28), sugar cane was planted during the month of August. They dropped two feet of sugar cane into each hole and improved the quality of the by smoking. After an eighteen-month regular maintenance, the canes were cut off close to the ground. The cutter cut the canes, cleaned the leaves and passed them on to the "amarreuse".[1] Afterwards, the "amarreuse" put the canes in a horse-driven cart that took them to the mills. The canes were then

[1] Women who were in charge of putting the canes into a bunch.

crushed by the mills in order to extract their juices. Various types of sugar mills were listed in Alibert's work. The first mills were powered by the native Indians and the African slaves. The second set of mills was powered by donkeys, mules or oxen. The last type was the windmills. In order to obtain raw sugar, the juice was evaporated and poured into the "Chaudières" for processing. Since raw sugar could not be consumed immediately, it had to be put in big barrels called "boucauts" and shipped to the French refineries. White sugar was then produced. Sometimes, the sugar was bleached on the spot by "terrage" and exported.

With the advent of the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution, the expensive steam machine reached Martinique. In spite of its high price, it helped sugar cane owners cut production costs. To solve the problem, a new factory system referred as "Usines Centrales"[2]was then put in place (La Maison de la Canne).

La Maison de la Canne scholars study the sugar making process in modern times. First of all, the canes are washed and cut with cane-cutters. Secondly, their fibres are eliminated so that the juice extraction be easier. Secondly, the canes are sent to mills for crushing. Thirdly, the fibres of the canes are used for fueling the boiler generating the energy needed for the factory. The sweet juice must undergo different purifying stages: filtration, washing and decantation. The sludge is taken, put to dry and used as manure. Finally, "the purified juice is then concentrated by means of evaporation in a "multi-effect" machine is then "cooked" and it crystallizes. The cooked substance must cool down before being kneaded and put in the turbine, sieved and placed in bags.

From sugar to rum

Established by the early French colonizers, the town Saint-Pierre became the hub for sugar and rum production. Distilleries were usually situated close to the harbor so that the molasses be treated and shipped to France as soon as possible. Saint-Pierre hosted at least twenty distilleries before it was destroyed by 1902 volcanic eruption. Martinique imported molasses from other Caribbean islands as well (Alibert, 76). Rum distillation was credited with French priests Jacques Du-Tertre and Jean-Baptiste Labat who applied themselves to the art of rum and brought refinement to the product.

Father Jacques Du-Tertre came to Martinique in the 1640's. Apart from being well versed in the botanical field, he had a good knowledge of the distillation process. He invented a distilled "eau-de-vie"[3] that was made from sugar cane (Alibert, 7). The "eau-de-vie" named "tafia[4]" or "guildive"[5]was produced at the "vinaigrerie" since the "vinaigriers" knew about the

[2]French word meaning "Central Factory".
[3]French word for brandy
[4]Guildive: former name given to alcohol made of sugar cane. However, the word "guildive" seems to be connected to English expression "Kill devil" to describe how the eau-de-vie was. (Musée du Rhum St. James)
[5]Tafia is an abbreviation of the word "ratafia" originating from Latin "rata fiat" meaning "concluded Market (Musée du Rhum St James).

distillation process (Alibert, 44). In 1694, Father Jean-Baptiste Labat, a French Catholic missionary, farmer, writer and traveler landed in Martinique where he lived nearly twenty years. He was also very familiar with the various distillation techniques and founded the Fonds-Saint-Jacques sugar plantation around 1696.

Among the twenty distilleries of Saint-Pierre, two of them made history. The Distellerie Depaz was originally founded by French Governor Jacques Du Parquet around 1651. The plantation was formerly named Habitation La Montagne. By the nineteenth century, it was bought over by the Pécoul family who converted it into a distillery. Victor Depaz[6], the son of the manager of the Habitation Périnelle, studied in France. While being there, Depaz received a telegram informing him that his family perished during the massive volcanic eruption that destroyed completely Saint-Pierre in 1902. The young Depaz returned to Martinique as soon as he completed his studies. But, the Habitation Périnelle was in ruins. Depaz decided to buy over 521 acres of land from the Aurigny family in order to build another distillery named after him.

The aforementioned Habitation Fonds-Saint-Jacques sugar plantation was the other place where rum was distilled in Saint-Pierre. Similar to the Habitation Périnelle, it succumbed to the disaster. Father Lefebure founded the Distillerie Saint-James[7] in Saint-Pierre around 1765. It was partially destroyed by the eruption but a few years later after the disaster, it was rebuilt in the town of Sainte-Marie. Alibert (2012) argues that Father Lefebvre, the founder of the Saint-James distillery used an English name to the rum to promote the rum in New England (184). In spite of the strict regulations related to the consumption of alcohol, King Louis XV authorized the Martiniquan planters to export their rum in other parts of the world.

Little is known about the origins of the word “rhum”. According to researchers, it may have derived from the scientific name of the sugar cane: “officinarium”. The word “rum” may have owed its origins to Spanish "ron" or it may be related to the abbreviation of “rumbustion” or “rumbullion” (Alibert, 20). These two terms were found in the Devonshire region and they meant “trouble” or “disorder”. The term “rhum” could have been linked to a Barbadian expression “rheu” meaning “stalk”. The consonant “h” was inserted in the word “rum”. The English word “rum” may have been brought to Martinique when the British occupied the island in the late eighteenth century (La Maison de la Canne). The manufacturing process of rum started around the same time as the sugar production.

Alibert explains that the juice was transferred to the sucrerie[8] by means of a gutter. The next step consisted of evaporating the juice into a cristallyzed syrup in a set of five “Chaudières”[9]that were line up above the furnace. These cast iron “chaudières” were given the

[6] See articles entitled “Rhum Depaz Saint-Pierre” www.depaz.fr/pages/histoires/html.
[7] It was the name of an English rich family.
[8] Sugar factory in the French colonies
[9] French word for “boiler”. A set of chaudières was known as équipage or batterie.

name of "La Grande", "La Propre" and "Le Flambeau"[10]. Historian Jacques Adélaïde (2000) points out other "Chaudières" names such as "Le Sirop"[11] and "La Batterie[12]". The "Clarifier" was the name given by the British to the La Grande. The liquid was constantly skimmed off so that it would not spill. Furthermore, it was ladled into the next "Chaudières". The evaporation process and the constant skimming of the juice caused it to thicken as it traveled from one "Chaudière" to the next.

Finally, the thick syrup called "sirop""batterie" was poured into a cooling tank and left there for crystallization. Meide adds that the molasses, the skimmed residues were left in fermenting vats for at least twelve days (18). These residues were useful in the production of the first sugar cane alcohol called "tafia"or "guildive[13]".

Alibert (2013, 7) notes that Father Labat ordered a distillation equipment from the French province called Charentes to improve the quality of the "eau-de-vie". The new equipment also called Alembic (still) comprised a "Chaudière" in which the liquid was gently heated. Such a process allowed the vaporization of both the alcohol and the water. The vapors of the heated liquid were collected in a dome and they were then transferred by swan-neck tubing to a cooling tank. Before the arrival of the "Alembic Labat" in the island, the condensation of the distillation process was done by putting wet linen over the condenser of stills[14]. In the seventeenth century, the discontinuous distillation method was commonly used. Scholars of La Maison de La Canne[15] explain that the discontinuous distillation method required rum makers to clean and refill their equipment. The fermented "grappe"[16] is evaporated in the curcubite[17] and the alcoholic vapor was condensed in the coil from which the alcohol was collected. Both the "head product"[18]and the "end" product were separated from each other in order to obtain an eau-de-vie known as "Coeur de chauffe,[19]"Alibert (2012, 46) states that the first liquor was kept for the first five days of the week. Afterwards, the same liquor was poured in one of the boiler and underwent the distillation process.

The continuous distillation method appeared in Martinique in the nineteenth century. Distillation columns also replaced the alembics and there was no need of interrupting the

[10] Generally speaking, the boilers were lined up in a particular order. La Grande (the Largest) was the largest one and it came first. La Propre (the Clean one) and La Torche (the Torch one) came last.
[11]French word meaning "syrup"
[12]French word literally meaning "battery". In the sugar industry context, the term takes another meaning "set of boilers".
[13] According to Alibert (2013, 20), the term "guildive" is fell into disuse in the Caribbean except in Haiti where it is still common.
[14] Musée du Rhum St. James Martinique (25 June 2015).
[15] Sugar cane museum located in the town of Trois-Ilets in southern Martinique.
[16] The grappe is given to the alcohol that is produced from distilled sugar cane. It is also referred as the wort.
[17] Other name given to the Chaudière.
[18]Substance obtained at the beginning of the distillation process whereas the "end product" is obtained at the end of the distillation process.

[19]As its name indicates, the "Coeur de Chauffe" is the spirit that is obtained at the heart of the distillation process.

equipment as it was done in the past. "The liquid came from the fermentation vats and it was pumped into the "wine vat" that was located at the highest point of the equipment. Afterwards, it was sent to the first "wine heater" where it collected heat from its contact with alcoholic vapors. The same liquid traveled to the second wine heater where it was continuously heated. It was then poured into the column through the feed plate. Finally, the liquid went down from plates to plates while losing gradually its alcohol content."[20]

The machines were versions of those used for the production sugar beet alcohol[21]. Compared to the Labat's apparatus, they could manage large batches in a short period of time. Additionally, the sugar beet models had to be adjusted to the rum. Such equipment prevented both sugar cane and juice from spoiling rapidly under the Martiniquan tropical climate. At first, the first imported sugar beet machines did not produce rum of good quality. The "heads"[22] were not properly separated from the "heart". Therefore, these machines had to be adjusted to improve quality of the rum.

The modern distillation columns are described by the Musée de Saint-James researchers. The columns are high tall cylinders comprising fifteen plates or trays. The stripping trays are found in the lower section of the cylinder and they increase the alcohol content of the vapor. The "rectification" trays either concentrate or rectify the alcohol. They are smaller than the stripping plates[23] and they concentrate or rectify the alcohol. Fermentation is the next step whereby the sugar becomes alcohol owing to the presence of bacteria and yeast. Then comes the process of distillation taking place in distillation columns. In this phase, the heat produced by the steam helps the extraction of both alcoholic and non-alcoholic ingredients that are found in the canes.

Laurie (2011, 4), differentiates between two common main distillation processes that are found in the English-speaking Caribbean: the traditional pot still and the modern continuous or column still. In the early days, the rum was produced in pot stills[24]. A number of ingredients such as ethanol, glycerol, aldehydes, volatiles acids, esters and higher alcohols are included in Martiniquan rum. The Mount Gay distillery in Barbados produces white and golden rums using either the "single distillation" or the "double distillation" methods. When rum is produced by the "single distillation" it contains a high volume of alcohol (97%). "Single distillation" is a process of continuous factional distillation taking place in a Coffey Still. The "double distillation" method generates rum with 86% of alcohol[25] . The distillation is done batch by batch in old copper stills which resemble those used for the production of cognac and whisky.

[20]Musée de la Maison de la Canne.
[21] "Rhum Agricole". http:www.rhum-agricole.net/site/en/fab_continue.
[22] The first set of liquids that come out of the still.
[23]Stripping plates are between 90 and 180 cm in diameter.
Rectification measure between 80 and 155 cm in diameter.
[24]A pot still was a boiling pan in which fermented molasses or cane juice mixture was heated. This equipment were used particularly to produce heavy rums containing flavour and aromas. The traditional pot still method consists of fermenting a product in small batches. See article entitled "The Encyclopedia of Rum". www.the pirateking.com/rum/rum_101.htm.
[25] Visit of the Mount Gay Museum (Barbados) on the 5th August 2015.

The differences between the "Rhum industriel" and the "rhum agricole"

Important steps are undertaken in the making process of rum. These include cutting, grinding, fermenting[26], distilling[27], aging and bottling. The canes are cut, washed and ground. Afterwards, their juice is extracted, fermented and distilled. The last stage involves aging and bottling. The rum is aged in an oak barrel from one year to ten years[28]. A description of the ageing process is provided at the Foursquare Distillery in Barbados: "While aging is in process evaporation takes place at an approximate rate of 1% per month. This results in the need to "top up" barrels once every year from the contents of barrel rum of some age. After aging, the rum is reduced by addition of pure de-mineralised water to a drinking strength of 43% al/vol (86 proof)".

Let us analyze how rum is made in Martinique. During the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution and Emancipation[29], many small "sucreries"[30] closed their doors. Consequently, larger sugar factories were in charge of the sugar industry. Two types of rums have been produced in Martinique over the years. The "Rhum industriel" or "Rhum traditionnel de sucrerie[31]" is made from molasses and sugar residues. Alibert (2012) informs us that the first "Rhum industriel" was produced Saint-Pierre during the colonial era (p.76). Martiniquan planters sold their molasses to American rum makers in the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, another source claims that Martinique began to produce their "rhum industriel" only in the nineteenth century[32]. Molasses have fermentable sugars and they can be stored for a long period of time[33]. The molasses and the yeast are fermented. There is 5% or 6% of alcohol in the juice resulting from the fermentation process. The rum originating from the columns contains between 65 and 75% of alcohol. Regulations do not allow makers to produce an over 65% spirit for the market[34]. Five types of "rhums industriels" such as "Grand Arôme"[35], "Rhum léger"[36], "Rhum traditionnel"[37], "rhum de coupage[38]" and "Rhum vieux[39]"are identified in Alibert's work (p.132).

[26] The fermentation process consist of converting sugar into alcohol. Yeasts are needed so that the fermentation occurs quickly.
[27] The distillation process requires producers to the wine so that volatile elements be vaporized and condensed.
[28] Information taken at the Musée du Rhum Clément
[29]Slavery was abolished in the French West Indies in 1848.
[30] French word meaning "sugar factory". See magazine entitled Le Rhum A.O.C Martinique-Un Rhum Unique. Launa Editions La Case à Rhum
[31] French name literally meaning "traditional rum of sugar factory".
[32] Petit Futé Martinique by Dominique Azias and Jean-Paul Labourdette (2008)
[33]"The Encyclopedia of Rum". www.thepirateking.com/rum/rum/_101.htm
[34]Petit Futé-Martinique by Dominique Azias and Jean-Paul Labourdette (2009). p.94
[35]A flavoured rum that is composed of non-alcoholic ingredients. It undergoes the process of fermentation for 8 or 10 days. The Grand Arôme is used for blending other rums.
[36] Light rum produced by a strong distillation process. Most of the "non-alcoholic" elements are extracted from the "rhumléger" (alcohol volume: 40º).
[37] This rum is made from fermented molasses (alcohol volume: 60º).
[38]The "rhum de coupage" is a mixture of "rhums traditionnels" and "Grands arômes". The Martiniquan bottlers colour it by caramelization process (Alibert, 132)
[39]A type of rum aged in oak barrel for two or seven years.

The "Rhum agricole" formerly named "Z'habitants" is a more recent product coming from the fermented sugar cane juice "vesou" (Alibert, 19). There was a link between the emergence of this rum and the arrival of the steam engine in the French Caribbean. The steam machine was connected to the sugar mill. Many "habitations"[40] worked together using this new equipment until the central plants were established. The steam engine was located at the central plants and many smallholdings made use of it to crush their canes. There were times when some of the smallholdings could not send their canes to the central plant by train because of their remote location. Therefore, they invented a rum made of sugar cane juice. This was the way the "Rhum agricole" came into the world.

The making process of the "rhum agricole" does not differ much from that of the "rhum industriel". The canes are washed and ground in a similar manner. The crushing process of the canes lasts about 36 hours and the canes go through the mills several times for juice extraction. The grinding residues are composed of a fiber named "bagasse". The "bagasse" is useful for the heating process of the boiler that generate energy the grinding mills and the distillation column.As soon as the juice is extracted, it is being fermented for 36 or 48 hours in the vats. The wine resulting from the fermentation process is known as "grappe".

"Rhum agricole" production is covered in an article entitled "Rhum Agricole[41]". To accelerate the process of fermentation, yeasts are essential. Spontaneous fermentation is a process whereby the sugar cane juice comes into contact with microbal agents that are found in the molasses, syrup or juice resulting from processing equipment. Other fermentation methods have come into play in "Rhum agricole" production. Manufacturers may resort to the pitching of the yeast into the "vesou". Sometimes, a sample of "vesou" is heated to generate fermentation. After fermentation, the tank content is sent to pitch other "vesou" tanks. Fresh cane juice tends to ferment very quickly after being extracted from the canes[42]. Normally, raw sugar cane juice contains at least 18 or 24% sugar. Since it is difficult to store it for an extended period of time, it must undergo fermentation immediately[43]. Finally, three major phases are identified in the fermentation process. First of all, the yeasts adjust to their environment in order to grow. Secondly, yeast cells multiply at a fast pace. The carbon dioxide is being released in large quantities. Thirdly, the yeasts begin to stop growing and remain at the bottom of the vat.

At the end of the distillation process, the rum is not ready for consumption because of its high alcohol content (70%). Producers must the rum in tanks for at least three or four months to get rid of the most volatile elements as well as impurities. Maturation as the next stage can proceed. White rum must remain in the tank for three months if the storage takes place in a wooden barrel. Such a process is called Maturation. The alcohol content of the "Rhum agricole"

[40]French word meaning plantation.
[41]"RhumAgricole". www.rhum-agricole.net/site/en/fab_fermentation.
[42]"Rhum Agricole". www.rhum-agricole.net/site/en/fab_fermentation.
[43]"Encyclopedia of Rum". www.thepirateking.com/rum/rum_101.htm

must be reduced to 50 or 55% for consumption. This explains the reason why producers add water to reduce the alcohol quantity in the distillate.

Gregory Vernant, the manager of the Neisson Distillery briefly describes the distillation column used in his factory. According to him, the 1952 French model named Savalle comprises 15 trays of exhaustion and 5 trays of concentration. The distilled liquid resulting from this column contains 73% of alcohol. During the distillation process, the column is indirectly heated by a boiler. With this type of column, produce can neither sort out nor rectify the product[44]. It is not unusual to see distilleries with more than three distillation columns. Sometimes, holes are inserted into the trays.

Contemporary Martinique produces a range of "rhums agricoles" such as the "Grappe blanche[45]""Rhum paille[46]"and the "rhum vieux[47]". Prior to the Second World War, there were about 130 distilleries producing the "Rhum agricole". Their number has significantly decreased over time. Only nine of them are still operating. These include Depaz, La Dillon, Neisson, JM, Saint-James, La Favorite, La Mauny, Trois-Rivières and le Simon. The "Rhums agricoles" Clément, Bally and Saint-Etienne are produced by the Simon distillery[48]. The three brands are controlled by three entities ("La Martiniquaise", "Le Groupe Hayot" and the "Bourdillon")[49].

The production of the "Rhum agricole" is subject to the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée laws. A series of regulations were indeed implemented on the 5th of November 1996 by The Institut National des Appellations d'Origine[50] (INAO). Albert Céline who researches the topic writes: " The AOC "Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée" correspond to the Garanteed Origin Appelation. It allows the recognition of a particular product that takes its qualities from its "terroir". The AOC is a very particular mark because it is not limited to the products' own characteristics but is closely linked with what is called in France the "terroir". The notion of "terroir" refers to natural components (geography, climate, geology…) as well as human components (skills, traditions, savoir-faire). That is why the production is one in a specific area that confers on the product a very strong identity. As a French Overseas Department, Martinique has to follow carefully the AOC regulations when producing its "Rhum agricole". The AOC

[44] It is important to note the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée allows neither sorting out nor rectification in the making process of the "Rhum agricole". See magazine entitled Rumporter. Le Magazine de la Culture Rhum. June 2014. www.rumporter.com/docs/rumporter-3.pdf.

[45]The word "grappe blanche" means "white grape" and it is given to white rum. It stays in the barrel for three month after distillation. This rum keeps the aromas of the freshly cut canes. The alcohol content is reduced by using either distilled or spring water.

[46]The "Rhum paille" (straw-coloured rum). It is aged in an oak barrel for eighteenth months. The "Rhum ambré is a blend of Rhum paille and Rhum vieux. It is used mainly to make pastry.

[47]The "Rhum vieux" is aged in oak barrel for three years. The rum is poured in a barrel that can 650 litres of rum Some of the "Rhum vieux" may five or 40 years of age.

[48] The Simon distillery is located in southern town of François in Martinique.

[49]Alibert (2012, 188)

[50] The INAO was founded in 1935 and its main objective is to protect and control places producing agricultural or food products having a good reputation among consumers. The Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée recognizes rums that are produced by the distillation of fresh sugar cane juice. They must meet certain requirements as well.

criteria[51]determining the quality of the "rhum agricole" have been listed in an article entitled "Rhum agricole"[52].

The consumption of rum in Martinique

Martiniquans have a great respect for their rum and they have developed rituals over the years. Some of them drink their "décollage"[53] early in the morning while others prefer the "Ti-Punch[54]" and the "Ti-Sèk" before having lunch. Alibert (2012) points out the presence of other terms related to drinking rum in Martinique (139). The "Pousse[55]" is needed after drinking coffee. Some people have their "Folibar" in a pub. The "L'heure du Christ"[56] is consumed at 3.00 p.m. The "Cocoyage" is a glass of coconut that is immediately by a glass of rum. As its name suggests, the "Vaten-Coucher[57]" send drinkers sleep just before bed time. Two other drinks "Planteur" and the "Shrub" are well appreciated by Martiniquans. The preparation of the two beverages is quite simple. The "Planteur" is a mixture of fruit juice, rum, nutmeg and Angustura bitters. The Christmas season is the right time for Shrub. The ingredients include white "Rhum agricole", the skin of two oranges, four prunes, one vanilla pod and teaspoon ground cinnamon. The orange skins are macerated in the rum for at least four days. Afterwards, they are put aside in bowl. The four chopped prunes, vanilla and the sugar cane syrup are mixed together. Finally, all the ingredients are soaked in rum for another three-day period.

The origins of the word "punch" seem unclear. La Maison de la Canne researchers write "Does the word come from the Hindu "Ponch"[58]. A writer of an article entitled "L'origine du Punch enfin trouvée[59]" argues that the word "punch" owes its name to Hindustani and Sanskrit languages. The Punch was initially made of local spices, rum, cinnamon and tea. In 1731, a new version of this drink rose in popularity. It was credited with British Admiral Edward Vernon who was responsible for the Royale Navy. The mixture of the ingredients mentioned earlier was heated particularly when it was very cold. A bit of water and lime was added to it as well. In 1713, King Louis XIV issued a decree forbidding the import of French West Indian rum into

[51] «The column must be heated through vapour injection. The plates in the stripping section must have a diameter between 0,7 and 2 metres (20 to 78 inches). The enrichment must be made of 5 to 9 copper plates. The stripping section must have at least 15 copper or stainless steel plates. The reflux has to be made through the use of one or several wine-heater or copper condensers. The distilled liquid must have an alcohol concentration between 65 and 75%. The fermentation process must be discontinuous and take place in open tanks of 500 hectolitres (13'208 US gallons). See "RhumAgricole". http//www.rhum-agricole.net/site/en/fab_continue.

[52] "Rhum Agricole". http://www.rhum-agricole.net/site/en/fab_continue.

[53]The word "décollage" means "to take off". It is a glass of straight rum taken before starting the day.

[54]Both the "ti-punch" and the "ti-sèk" are drunk prior to lunch. The former consists of brown sugar, rum and a squeezed lime whereas the latter is straight rum.

[55]French word "pousse" means "push".

[56]This word literally means "Christ's time". It corresponds to the time when Jesus Christ was put to death on Good Friday.

[57]The word "Vaten-Coucher" comes from the French expression "Va te coucher" meaning "go to bed".

[58]This word means "five" (from the number of ingredients that were needed to make it in the past).

[59]"L'origine du Punch enfintrouvée". www.100cocktails.com/magazine/10228/l-origine-enfin-trouvee.html.

France. In spite of the restriction, rum had headed to the French market twenty years before (Alibert, 28). So had the "ponche", as it was frequently called. It the same Punch that Martiniquans have adopted today as one of their favourite drink.

In conclusion, Martinique has been experiencing difficulties in preserving its sugar industry. But the island has managed to produce its two rums: "rhum industriel" and "rhum agricole". We note that Martiniquans are attached to their rum and consume it at particular time during the day. The names given to any drink made of rum vary based on the time it is taken. Martiniquan rum particularly "Rhum agricole" has enjoyed a good position in Europe, the United States and even Japan.

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