



Entries by David Driscoll (2521)

Top

Spirits Journal

Rum(blings) Down South

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After watching over a hundred different customers from all over the country scramble to get their bottle of the Foursquare Criterion rum last week, it's clear that we've got something of a rum movement on our hands. The question I have to ask is: are rum fans interested in rum the same way early whiskey geeks from the last decade were originally interested in whiskey? To give you an example, when I first started learning about single malt and Bourbon, I wanted to try everything. I wanted to find cool new producers, dig into every nook and cranny, and search out the most interesting bottles I could possibly find. I went all over Scotland, all over Kentucky, into every liquor store and every dead-end bodega I could find, hoping each location might have something out of the ordinary to sample. When it comes to rum, I'm clear on what the collector market is after: pot still Jamaican funk, full proof Bajan spice, and ancient Guyanese treasures. Are we willing to go further, however?

What about something outside of that limited idiom? What about an American secret that's been making rum right under our noses for almost a decade and who started the project back in 1999? Not just rum, mind you, but single estate rum from its own home grown sugar cane. Georgia's Richland Rum has come to K&L and Bourbon drinkers might want to take notice. While Foursquare rum might have the backing of the greater Bourbon community, I don't think there's a specimen in the category that more resembles American whiskey than Richland.

The question you have to ask with Richland is: do you want rum that tastes like rum, or rum that tastes like Bourbon? Because if you want rum to taste like rum, Richland doesn't taste like any rum I've ever had. To me, it tastes like Heaven Hill or LDI single barrel juice. Maybe that's because it's aged in standard size virgin oak barrel made from Wisconsin white oak. I get a hint of sweet sugar cane on the nose, but from the first sip, to the mid-palate, to the rich and spicy finish I get baking spices, sweet oak, and loads of wood. Founded in the late nineties by Erik Vonk, Richland is no Johnny-come-lately to the booze game, but in order to create a single estate rum you first have to create the estate. It wasn't until 2011 that Richland bottled its first rums, distilled on a small alembic pot still from his its own sugar cane syrup. It wasn't until 2017, however, the Richland decided to reach out to some of California's key retailers in the hope of taking its rum mission beyond Georgia's borders. In a spirits market that continues to be dominated by Bourbon fever, they've got the right flavor profile.

If you're seriously geeky about rum, and happen to have a taste for American whiskey, I'd recommend checking out a bottle. This is the first American rum (beyond St. George's limited agricole series) that I think establishes a new American genre. There's a lot of good information and photos [on their official website](#) as well. As of now [it's available on the website](#) and in the stores!

-David Driscoll