

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 17(6) of Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 1576/89

(2021/C 120/05)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 27 of Regulation (EU) 2019/787 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

MAIN SPECIFICATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL FILE

‘DEMERARA RUM’

File number: PGI-GY-02423 – 28.6.2018

1. Geographical indication to be registered

‘DEMERARA RUM’

2. Category of the spirit drink

Rum (Category 1 of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 110/2008)

3. Description of the spirit drink

A spirit drink with discernible sugar cane organoleptic characteristics, which is produced exclusively by fermentation and distillation of molasses or sugar-cane based substrate.

Chemical Requirements

Alcoholic strength is not less than 40 % by volume.

The total sum of congener levels (including acetaldehyde, ethyl acetate, higher alcohols) expressed in grams per hectolitre of anhydrous ethyl alcohol:

LIGHT-BODIED DEMERARA RUM	MEDIUM-BODIED DEMERARA RUM	HEAVY-BODIED DEMERARA RUM
Less than 30,0 g/HL (and less than 10,0 g/HL esters)	Greater than 30,0 g/HL but less than 300,0 g/HL (and more than 10,0 g/HL but less than 50,0 g/HL esters)	More than 300,0 g/HL (and more than 50,0 g/HL esters)

Total acidity, expressed in grams of acetic acid per hectolitre of anhydrous ethyl alcohol:

LIGHT-BODIED DEMERARA RUM	MEDIUM- OR HEAVY-BODIED DEMERARA RUM
Less than 20,0 g/HL	Greater than 20,0 g/HL and less than 200,0 g/HL

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 130, 17.5.2019, p. 1.

Organoleptic Requirements

Appearance: Transparent with liquid consistency, density and viscosity of body varying with age.

Colour: varying with age, from colourless for unaged, to pale light straw yellow for lightly aged, to amber/gold and deeper shades of copper/bronze/mahogany for higher aged rums.

Aroma: is primarily derived from the fermentation of sugar-cane based raw material, with the characteristic 'Demerara Rum' possessing hints of sugar-cane sweetness. This is supplemented by the subtle fruity and floral notes that are enriched through the distillation process, and the sweet aromatic, nutty, spicy, woody, herbal, earthy or other tertiary aromas that evolve during the maturation process, to the extent that the distillate is high in targeted congeners and is aged.

Flavour: distinct flavour profiles are pursued through specific styles of distillation, ranging from light/medium/heavy-bodied rums produced on wooden/copper/steel Pot and Column Stills of various configurations. 'Demerara Rums' are characteristically rounded, smooth and rummy varying from slightly sweet to dry, with tasting notes that complement the aromatic profile. The flavours may only be up to a maximum of 2,5 % of the volume of the finished product, and the rum must be free from added colouring matter (except where the colour is derived from wood during maturation or from caramel derived from sugars).

Specific characteristics (compared with spirit drinks of the same category)

The complex range of aromatic flavours of 'Demerara Rum' and its full-bodied nature distinguishes it from other rums. The complexity of the flavours is a result of the use of the traditional process of production and the specific mineral content of waters in the Demerara region of Guyana.

4. Geographical area concerned

'Demerara Rum' is fermented and distilled on the low coastal plains of Demerara, a county in Guyana, and is bound by the Boeraserie River on the west and the Abary Creek on the east. Demerara county is located on the northern coastline of South America, bordering the Atlantic Ocean, at roughly 6° 48' N 58° 10' W just above the Equator.

5. Method for obtaining the spirit drink

The sugar cane substrate is sourced in the geographical area and used in the production of 'Demerara Rums' in a multi-stage process, as set out below.

Yeast Propagation: Yeast of the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* strain is propagated in the molasses or sugar-cane based substrate diluted with ground water from Demerara artesian wells, and appropriate quantities of nutrients and acid for optimal pH. Once sufficient mass of yeast cells is propagated, the culture is transferred to the fermenter tank and filled with fresh diluted substrate, along with nutrient addition and pH correction to set up the fermenting wash.

Fermentation: The yeast converts the sugars in the fermenting wash to alcohol in the fermenter. The wash is circulated through a heat exchanger for cooling. This maintains a homogeneous mixture at a temperature of about 32°C, which is optimal for yeast to ferment as much sugars to alcohol as possible, typically 6-8 % by volume.

Distillation: Upon completion of fermentation, the fermented wash (with 6-8 % ethanol by volume) is pumped to the distillation feed tanks, where it is fed to the Distillation Stills. The distillation of light- and medium-bodied Demerara Rums take place in Continuous Stills of 2/3/4/5 Columns, and heavy-bodied Demerara Rums take place in single/double pot stills. Crucially, these stills are made of Amazonian Greenheart hardwood or copper and/or stainless steel, reflecting the immense assortment of unique distilling styles, formats and equipment makes that are employed to produce Demerara Rums. Each distillate is recognizable by its distinct flavour profile and is thus identified by a unique marque, depending on the Still and distilling style in which it is produced.

Maturation: The fresh distillates of Demerara Rums are diluted to 70-80 % using deionized water sourced from Demerara artesian wells, then filled into American white oak casks, typically, or other casks as required, for various periods of maturation in Warehouses under tropical climatic conditions (typically 24-32 °C and 70 % humidity). The Warehouses are situated at sea level on the coast of the Demerara region bordering the Atlantic Ocean, and are not hermetically sealed to allow for ventilation by the North East Trade Winds to temper the high temperature and humidity for cask ageing the Demerara Rums.

Blending: Distillates of the desired marques and ages are blended together, as required, for the production of blended Demerara Rum. Blending with rums produced outside the geographical area is not permitted. The marques in each blend are carefully selected to complement each other and produce a complex yet subtle product that offers a specific market proposition to the consumer. Demerara Rum is not flavoured and is only sweetened to round off the final taste of the product up to a maximum of 20 grams per litre.

The blends are diluted to the required alcoholic strength using deionized water extracted from Demerara artesian wells, and are rested in metal tanks or wooden vats to allow the blends to marinate, be fine-tuned and quality-controlled so as to ensure balance and consistency in each batch.

Bottling: Cask Aged Demerara Rum, Special Reserve Demerara Rum and Grand Special Reserve Demerara Rum must be bottled in the geographic origin as the waters used in dilution and blending contribute to the minerality profile intrinsic in Demerara Rum which is inextricably linked to the specific quality of Demerara artesian water.

The requirement for Cask Aged Demerara Rums, Special Reserve Demerara Rums and Grand Special Reserve Demerara Rums to not only be fermented, distilled and aged in Demerara, but to also be blended and bottled there, is to safeguard the reputational and historical integrity of the premium and super-premium value, which can only result from the local knowledge and techniques of the production process.

A second issue is to avoid adulteration. The fact of the difference between Demerara-aged and non-Demerara-aged rums could provide incentive to bottlers elsewhere to attempt to compensate for the lack of tropical aged quality by these deceptive measures. This is all the more salient given that a significant quantity of unaged Demerara Rum produced is exported, which gives rise to the risk of aged rums not consistent with the Demerara Rum age profile, to be bottled, sold and marketed as aged rums. Thus, the premium which consumers attribute to Demerara-aged rums can potentially be diminished by imitation products that appropriate the high value of true aged Demerara rums.

To ensure the quality of 'Demerara Rum', the blending and bottling of these categories of rums must be carried out in the geographical area so as to guarantee and protect the specific qualities of these products.

Hygiene: The Bottled rums must be free of from permanent sedimentation or suspended matter of any type.

Water quality: The quality of the water in the geographical area distinguishes it from other territories for instance, in the low levels of hardness (calcium) relative to other islands in the Caribbean which typically have high water hardness, and the moderate levels of iron and sodium. This is due to the specific sub-strata geography in terms of the soil type and formation history from recent and sub-recent marine and fluvio-marine deposits, as well as the high-water table and close proximity to saltwater which keeps groundwater aquifers well-replenished with high minerality-bearing water.

6. **Link with the geographical environment or origin**

Geographical link: The specificity of Demerara Rum lies in the combination of many factors stemming from the agro-ecological conditions of both the planting area of the sugar cane and the ageing area, as well as from the authentic character of the production process, which brings together nature, tradition, art and science.

The following factors link the quality, characteristics, reputation and heritage of 'Demerara Rum' to the geographical area:

Environmental Conditions: The local environment is composed of clay soils from recent and sub-recent marine and fluvio-marine deposits along the low coastal plains of Demerara (primarily hydraquents but also some medihemists). The high retention of minerals and organic content in these clay soils redound to high yields in the local sugar cane crop, which lead to rich sugar content in the substrate for fermentation.

In addition, this wet soil type is conducive to the growth of various microbial species that fix nutrients in the soil. Owing to the manual/semi-mechanical method of harvesting the sugar cane, there is much interaction of the sugar cane stalks with the soil, some of which survives the journey to the factory and end up in the molasses by-product that is primarily fermented to produce Demerara Rum. As such, the fermentable substrate is rich in both sludge and microbial species that impart exclusive influences on the fermentation process through a multitude of side reactions that yield co-products that enrich the breadth and depth of the fermented wash.

The atmosphere in sugar cane growing areas are naturally rife with microflora like native wild yeasts and fungi, which come into contact with the sugar cane stalks and thus end up in the molasses or sugar-cane based substrate. These wild yeasts and fungi are also present around the distillery owing to the close proximity to sugar cane cultivation, and are allowed to further interact with the fermentation process since the vessels are not hermetically isolated from the environment. The natural fermentation by these native species augments the controlled fermentation by the propagated yeast culture of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, resulting in the fermented wash being further enriched due to the unique side reactions of these native microflorae.

All of these environmental factors lead to a fermented wash with high alcohol quality and a healthy presence of congeners that permit the distiller to pursue distinct flavour profiles through skilful flavour isolation in the distillation process. Consequently, Demerara Rums are renowned for their flavourful character and smoothness, and the distinctive sugar-cane sweetness on the aroma.

Climatic Conditions: The tropical/equatorial climate of Demerara is significant for its year-round consistency of high temperature (24-32 C) and humidity (average 70 %), with the only variation being two alternating sunny and rainy seasons (average annual rainfall 2 500 mm). This affects the growing and harvesting seasons for the sugar cane (to coincide with rainy and sunny seasons), since the rainfall pattern in the rainy season (100-300 mm per day, with an intensity as high as 23 mm per hour, during April-July and December-February) precludes harvesting. To allow for rum production during the out-of-crop rainy season, molasses or sugar-cane based substrate is stocked in bulk storage which subjects it to the environmental factors that impact the quality of its eventual fermentation – more bacterial presence leads to higher congener levels in the fermented wash to be distilled.

Ageing under ambient tropical climatic conditions of year-round, steady high temperature and humidity contribute crucially to the accelerated pace of maturation, estimated to be 2-3 times faster than under temperature conditions. Thus, Demerara Rums tend to be more mature than comparably aged spirits from temperate climates, allowing them to demonstrate a superior smoothness, with complex flavours and rich aromas that evolve from the chemistry of the maturation process, through which the complex interactions between the oak and rum greatly enhance the extraction and generation of flavours.

The Demerara region is at or very slightly below sea level along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean allows for pronounced sea breezes, notably the North East Trade Winds. These winds not only ensure the dispersal of microflora throughout the low-lying coastlands, and thus preserve the environmental impact on fermentation, but also allow for ventilation of the barrel warehouses which are thus not needed to be temperature or humidity-controlled. Consequently, there is more advanced tropical year-round ageing, which has a significant impact on the character of Demerara Rums.

Water Quality: Water used in the production of Demerara Rums is sourced exclusively from artesian wells in the upper sands of the coastal aquifer, generally of depth 100-200 feet and thickness 50-400 feet, or the 'A' sands which is typically encountered between 200-300 feet below the surface with thickness of 50-200 feet. Due to the close proximity to the Demerara River, the water table is generally high and well-replenished, with low levels of hardness (< 10 mg/L) but moderate levels of minerals particularly iron (> 5 mg/L) and salinity (up to 1 200 mg/L). Since this water is used in fermentation, in steam generation for distillation, and after treatment and deionization, in the dilution of the rum for ageing, blending and bottling, the minerality profile intrinsic in Demerara Rum is inextricably linked to the specific quality of Demerara artesian water.

The mineral profile of the local water has a particular impact on the aging process. For instance, oxalic acid which is formed during fermentation, is a chelating agent that may bond with minerals. The calcium oxalate, which thus forms during the ageing process, has increased solubility with the presence of sodium or magnesium from the water. The minerals therefore help to maintain, if augment the presence of flavour components during the ageing process.

Human and process factors: Knowledge/skills/expertise in the production processes that were developed in Demerara were handed down over the centuries, including the philosophical approach to distilling where complex flavour profiles are pursued directly through fermentation and distillation, which have remained largely unchanged from the original methods.

Moreover, production to this day continues on craft stills by artisanal distillers who have great experience in perfecting the quality of Demerara Rums in small production batches. These craft stills date back to the origins of distilling on many local plantations, such as the *Double Wooden* pot still that was originally installed at Plantation Port Mourant in 1732, and the *Wooden Coffey* column still that originated at Plantation Enmore in 1880, both of which are still in operation today in Demerara, and are the only ones of their kind still surviving anywhere in the world.

Historical origins: Demerara Rums are celebrated for more than 300 years of artisanal rum production in the original Double Wooden Pot and the Coffey stills invented in Guyana. Rums from Demerara have been exported for more than 200 years including historical supply to the British Royal Navy for the daily ration to sailors. Some of these original stills have survived and are in operation to this day.

The confluence of heritage, natural factors, and the art and science of distillation by traditional methods, equipment and human expertise has immeasurably maintained the character and quality of Demerara Rums as well as their reputation.

Reputation: The Oxford English Dictionary defines Demerara Rum as a rum made in Guyana. Until the practice was stopped in 1970, UK Navy Rum, the rum given to sailors was Demerara Rum. A tax on the import of Demerara Rum can be found on the UK statute books from 1816. Demerara Rum was referred to in Reports of the UK Houses of Parliament in the 1840s. Reference to Demerara Rum is found in all good histories of rum and rum production including 'Rum: a global history' by Richard Foss from 2012 as well as in French and Danish listings of quality rums. 'Rum' a book from 2003 by Denis A. Nicol lists many sources showing Demerara Rum in production since the mid-17th century.

7. **European Union or national/regional provisions**

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8. **Applicant**

8.1. *Member State, Third Country or legal/natural person:*

Demerara Distillers Limited, a Limited Liability Company

8.2. *Full address (street number and name, town/city and postal code, country):*

Address: Plantation Diamond, East Bank Demerara, Georgetown, Guyana

Tel. +592 2656142; +592 2652089; +592 2652076

Fax +592 2653367

Email: info@demrum.com

9. **Supplement to the geographical indication**

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10. **Specific labelling rules**

'Demerara Rum' comes in following varieties:

- Demerara Rum: unblended or blended but without being blended with alcohol produced outside the geographic area,

- Old Demerara Rum: unblended or blended rum aged for a minimum of 2 years without being blended with alcohol produced outside the geographic area,
- Cask Aged Demerara Rum: unblended or blended rum aged for a minimum of 3 years,
- Special Reserve Demerara Rum: unblended or blended rum aged for a minimum of 12 years,
- Grand Special Reserve Demerara Rum: unblended or blended rum aged for a minimum of 25 years.

The following should appear on the principal display panel of the label:

- (a) brand name;
- (b) product name;
- (c) alcoholic content;
- (d) net content;
- (e) the address of the manufacture;
- (f) the country of origin;
- (g) a statement of age or a statement of maturity.

Each bottle of rum has label with registered trademark: 'Demerara Rum' – image

