

THE GOOD STUFF

According to Hamilton, "If you drink a good rum, you'll say, 'Wow, this is something that's palatable.'" And, he says some of the best aged rums "are like a fine cognac or whiskey." He recommends the following four rums. — J.S.

English Harbour Extra Old Rum

"It's got a nice smoky flavor, and it's smooth," says the self-proclaimed Ambassador of Rum.

El Dorado Special Reserve 15-Year-Old Rum

This Guyana rum is "very heavy, smoky-oak-flavored," says Hamilton. "It's not what people perceive of as rum. When you taste it, you'll think it's new and exciting and different."

La Favorite Vieux

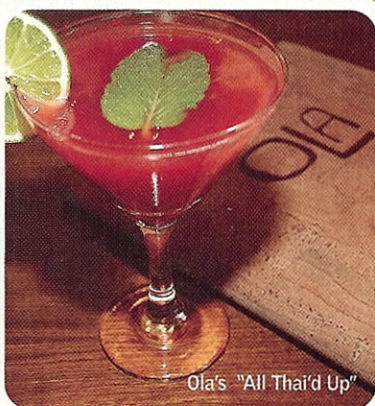
"It rivals a fine cognac," he says. "It's got a smooth flavor and has a bit of cardamom on the finish."

Neisson Rhum Agricole Blanc

Named one of the best spirits of 2005 by *Wine Enthusiast*, this sugarcane-juice rum from Martinique has citrus and floral notes that end with a "rich honey and fresh sugarcane finish."



Sushi Samba



Ola's "All Thai'd Up"

RUMAROUND

These days, rum's taking up more room on bar menus around the country. So slip onto a bar stool and try a rum toddy or a straight-up pour. — J.S.

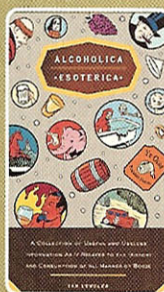
- In New York City, **SUSHI SAMBA's** drink menu features rum concoctions aplenty, including the Mora Negra, a lively blend of fresh lime, mango puree, blackberry, sugar, and rum. 245 Park Avenue South, (212) 475-9377, www.sushisamba.com
- When Hamilton is in San Francisco, he often shows up at **ABSINTHE BRASSERIE & BAR** to imbibe in the variety of rums from the brasserie's long menu of spirits. Their devilish logo alone is good fun. 398 Hayes Street, (415) 551-1590
- **DELILAH'S** is pure heaven for Chicago spirits fans who also happen to like a bit of rock and roll. Make sure you take a taxi, though — they've got plenty for you to taste. 2771 North Lincoln Avenue, (773) 472-2771
- Stop into **OLA** in Miami's Savoy Hotel to taste a drink (or two) off of their extensive mojito menu. Or get All Thai'd Up with raspberry rum, sugar, Thai basil, champagne, and lime. 455 Ocean Drive, (305) 695-9125, www.olamiami.com
- Put down the dice and get over to **SENSI** at the Bellagio in Las Vegas. The Perfect Storm, made with rum, homemade Sensi ginger ale, and bitters, awaits. 3600 Las Vegas Boulevard South, (877) 234-6358, www.bellagio.com



WHO KNEW?

Ian Lendler's *Alcoholica Esoterica* (Penguin, \$14) is brimming over with info on all things alcohol. We found the following rum facts fascinating. — J.S.

- » Before it was called rum, from *rumbullion*, a British slang term for 'an uproar, a great tumult,' the liquor was known as Kill-Devil.
- » Two popular rum concoctions were created by Americans who went to Cuba in 1898 with Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders: the daiquiri and the Cuba Libre (also known as a rum-and-Coke).
- » In the Caribbean, rum is sprinkled on a newborn baby's forehead for luck.



> mix it up

STRAWBERRY LYCHEE PUNCH

Muddle:

- 3 strawberries
- 2 lychees

1/2 ounce lychee juice

Add with ice:

- 1/4 ounce lime juice
- 1/4 ounce simple syrup
- 2 ounces white rum

Shake vigorously. Pour into a snifter.

— from Park Blue, 158 West 58th Street, New York

GANSEVOORT FIZZ

- 2 ounces aged rum
- 1 ounce drambuie
- 1 ounce fresh lemon juice
- 2 dashes of bitters
- 2 ounces chilled club soda

Fill a cocktail shaker with ice, add the rum, drambuie, lemon juice, and bitters, and shake well. Strain into an ice-filled highball glass and top with the club soda.

— from 5 Ninth, 5 Ninth Avenue, New York