




HUSK
— RUM —

CULTIVATED AUSTRALIAN RUM

PROVENANCE: PEOPLE + PLACE



Martinique, the spiritual home of French cane juice rum

INSPIRATION AND PASSION

Australia has a long and colourful history of rum stretching back to the Rum Corps and Rum Rebellion of 1808, leading two years later to the introduction of our first legal currency, the Holy Dollar.

Until recently, pretty much all rum in Australia was made from molasses, as is 97% of the world's rum. But as our founder Paul Messenger discovered on an island-hopping adventure through the Caribbean, molasses isn't the only thing you can use to make rum.

In 2009 on the French island of Martinique, Paul found himself sipping a Ti' Punch in a small coastal bar in the shadow of Mount Pele on a lazy, summer afternoon.

The locals at the bar proudly proclaimed that their rum, commonly known as *agricole* rum (agricultural rum), was the best rum in the world. He met this with a grin - he'd heard the same claim on just about every Caribbean island he'd visited.

But this was interesting. They insisted that their rum really was different, because it was made from freshly crushed cane juice, grown on their land. Due to this it had, like a good wine, *terroir*, the unique character of the people and place where it had been made – their beautiful island home of Martinique.

PAUL RECALLS...

"I had to admit it was pretty good as I'd never had a Ti' Punch before – a little raw sugar, squeeze and drop a fresh lime cheek and a good shot of white Agricole rum, well stirred and sipped slowly.

After a while I began to see what they were talking about – this bright, clean, heady spirit was unlike any rum I'd tasted before.

It had a vibrancy and complexity that I will forever associate with that little bar on that little beach on that small island in the company of friendly people, so far away.

Later I sought out the distillery where that rum was made and spent many hours talking to staff and exploring every aspect of its production from the crushing of the cane in the big roller mill driven by an ancient steam engine, the fiery boiler at one end of the building, to the large steel fermenters and copper column stills at the other end from which flowed that sweet aromatic spirit.

After dinner that night I was treated to a 20 year-old, tropical aged, sipping rum, equal to any fine single malt whisky I'd tasted, and in that moment I became a believer in this unusual French agricole rum."

Paul's time on Martinique got him thinking. Australia is a sugar cane producing country. Why not try to develop an Australian expression of this quality, sipping style of rum drawing from the unique provenance of the homeland where he grew up.

And so Husk Distillers was established in a small green farm shed with a 50L, and later a 1000L hand beaten copper still. Over the next 10 years he would pioneer the cultivation and production of this new style of rum from the freshly crushed juice of the finest local sugar cane varieties on a little farm distillery across the river from Tumbulgum in northern NSW.

To reflect its nature and characteristics, he named this style Cultivated Australian Rum.



Husk founder Paul sampling Husk Rum in the barrel house

Ti' Punch with unaged (white) rum



OUR PLACE

Rum can be made from molasses anywhere in the world and all year round. Cultivated rum can only be made where sugar cane grows and only during the 4 or 5 months of the cane harvesting season. In Australia that means in one of the five cane regions along the 2,100km coastal plain from Grafton, NSW to Mossman in north Queensland.

Returning from the Caribbean with that dream of creating an Australian agricole rum, Paul and wife Mandaley were strongly drawn back to the Tweed Valley, northern NSW, with its stunning landscape, flourishing cane industry, rural lifestyle and close proximity to great surf beaches, bars and restaurants.

Growing up just across the border and completing his thesis on the volcanoes of eastern Australia, the geologist in Paul saw something about this place that he knew well from his childhood, that just made sense when it came to making rum with *terroir*.

The farm they chose at Tumbulgum is situated in the eroded core of the once mighty Tweed shield volcano which 23 million years ago rose 2 km above the coastal plain, with its focal point, Mt Warning/Wollumbin.

The vast flank of the volcano stretched from Mt Tamborine in the north to Ballina in the south, west to Beaudesert, Canungra, down the Border Ranges to Kyogle, Casino and Lismore; where scorching hot lavas flowed into the sea creating some of the world's most fabled surf breaks at Burleigh, Kirra, Point Danger/Snapper Rocks, to Fingal, Cape Byron and Lennox Heads; where 23 million years of erosion had carved out the deepest caldera in the southern hemisphere – the fertile Tweed River Valley.

He knew that this place had all the elements to produce a truly fine rum. Ten years later, he would proudly claim that Husk Rum is “~~the best Rum in the World!~~” haha, perhaps, but that should read *the spirit of the caldera coast*.



The lush cane fields and rolling hills around Husk Farm



The caldera is home to the best surf breaks in Australia, from Byron Bay to Burleigh Heads



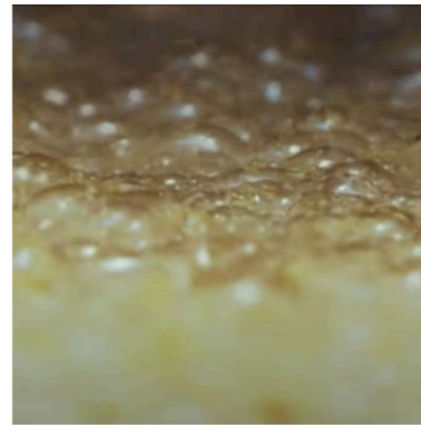
Husk Farm Distillery

OUR PROCESS

Ten years of research and development has resulted in an Australian expression of this unusual style of rum that is produced in a dramatic and beautiful location.

The idea was to grow select varieties of local sugar cane chosen for the drinking quality of the extracted juice. The cane would then be harvested and quickly crushed, the juice fermented and distilled and the rum spirit then aged in barrels. Years later each batch would be bottled and labelled - all on the farm at Tumbulgum. He also wanted to learn how to make unaged cane spirit that seemed to so faithfully capture the true essence of place.

But if he thought this would be easy he would need to think again as every step of this farm to bottle process would ultimately be re-thought, re-engineered or re-created from scratch to adapt to the people and place of this Caldera Coast.

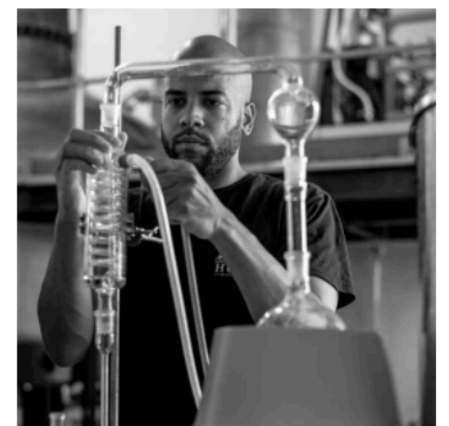
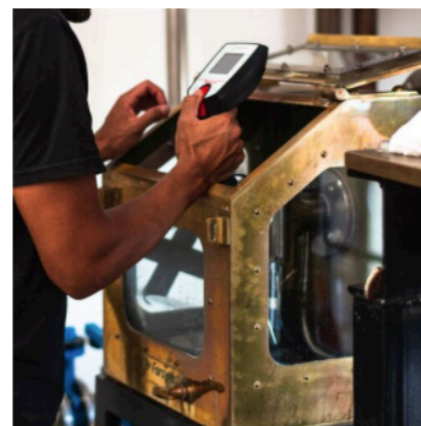


THE CHALLENGES

Like all rum made from fresh cane juice, Cultivated Australian Rum is seasonal. Cane juice can't be stored or transported far from its source without losing its integrity and flavour characteristics and fermenting naturally with wild yeast. Once the cane fully matures the race begins to get the season's harvest off the paddock and into the barrels before the summer rain dilutes the sugar content of the cane.

Indigenous micro-organisms make cane juice an unstable substrate for fermentation as the bacteria and native yeast cells that grow naturally on the cane stalk and in the soil, start to consume sugar as soon as the stalk is cut. This imparts unique flavours to the rum however if not carefully controlled can also result in unpredictable and unsavoury flavour development.

By contrast, molasses, a by-product of industrial sugar production, has been boiled and clarified, rendering it devoid of life. It is therefore a very stable substrate that can be stored for long periods of time and transported long distances - ideal for making rum anywhere in the



UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

MOLASSES

An industrial by-product from sugar production after cane juice has been clarified and boiled down leaving no sign of life as you can see from Slide 1. For distillers, this provides a good, inert substrate for fermentation and can be stored for long periods of time enabling year-round rum making.



CANE JUICE

A raw agricultural product that can't be stored. The moment sugarcane is cut, indigenous yeasts and bacteria begin to digest sugar and multiply. Slide 2 shows freshly crushed juice prior to yeast pitching, you can see indigenous yeast and small clumps of bacterial cells growing and budding.



To ensure quality, Cultivated Australian Rum can only be made close to the cane paddock where the cane is grown, preferably on the same farm because time is of the essence. Control over the milling process is also critical to produce a clean, filtered juice of known cane varieties in the shortest possible time from the paddock. Designing and building a small-scale sugar mill is no mean feat and can represent a substantial capital investment.

This all leads to fermentation, the most critical step, as this is where all flavour development occurs.

The ability to carefully control the conditions of fermentation is critical to harness the complex interplay between indigenous yeast, bacteria and the distillers chosen cultured yeast and ensure only the most desirable flavour compounds are produced ready for the next step – distillation.

Cultivated rums will always reflect the “*terroir*” or provenance of the region where they are produced – the local cane varieties and growing methods, geology, soil, water, climate, seasons, people and the production methods they’ve chosen to suit their environment.

A DIFFERENT CHARACTER

The rules around the production of traditional molasses rums vary from country to country but the taste we are most familiar with in Australia is characterised by heavy and sweet notes of sticky toffee and vanilla for dark aged rums, while white rums usually have a very light flavour profile.

Cultivated rums are vibrant, complex and fruity. They tend to have an earthy or grassy character and are typically dry rather than sweet. Unaged (white) cultivated rums, or cane spirits, are full of flavour and can be enjoyed in cocktails, mixed simply with ginger beer & lime, or sipped straight up in a Ti' Punch. Aged cultivated rums should be sipped and savoured like a fine malt whisky or cognac.

WHY “CULTIVATED AUSTRALIAN RUM”?

Fine spirits, like Martinique agricole rum, scotch whisky, bourbon, cognac, armagnac, calvados are all governed by strict rules that seek to define these products, ensure their quality, promote their provenance and protect consumers. When someone buys a bottle of spirit with one of those names anywhere in the world they can be assured of the quality, character and origin of the liquid.

These spirits and the rules that define them have been developed over hundreds of years building reputations for premium quality and prestige. So, when we set about creating a new style of Australian rum, we naturally wanted to learn from the success of these prestige international spirits.

To that end we registered a trademark with IP Australia and a set of rules that define where and how rum can be made to be called Cultivated Australian Rum. In essence, the rum must be made from 100% fresh cane juice of known cane varieties in a Recognised Australian Cane Growing Region between Grafton, NSW and Mossman, QLD. It must be unadulterated with no added sugar, flavours, spices or additives.

The word “cultivated” stems from its agricultural meaning, to cultivate, grow and nurture from the land. It’s synonym agricole or agricole is reserved under EU legislation to define this style of rum in one of the French Overseas Departments including Martinique, Guadeloupe or Reunion.



Head Distiller Quentin Brival sampling a limited release Husk Rum



The Messenger Family



The Husk Rum range



Husk Farm Distillery



Sampling sub-tropical aged rum in the Husk Barrel House



THE NEW TASTE OF AUSTRALIAN RUM FROM FARM TO BOTTLE

“Making fresh juice rum is expensive and challenging and it’s fair to say that when we set out on this fabulous adventure more than ten years ago we had little understanding of the true cost and challenge that lay ahead of us. A healthy dose of naivety is often a prerequisite for such ventures,” muses Paul.

But why persist?

“As the years passed, the struggle and mounting challenges seemed only to strengthen our resolve to persist in the pursuit of distinction.”

For Paul, inspiration comes from the colourful and romantic history of whisky and rum over the centuries, having visited places like Speyside, Islay, Barbados, Jamaica and Martinique and growing up in the Caldera Coast where sugar cane has been part of the landscape for 160 years.

“I’m a lover of history and perhaps guilty of occasionally romanticising it. When we look at the history of rum it’s easy to overlook the hardship, misery and struggle endured by those creating it, but the fine quality spirits that endured and remain with us, have become timeless and that’s the romance. It’s hard to contemplate such excellence born out of such struggle ever disappearing from the lips of humanity.”

The driving ambition for me was to create something unique, extracted from this land through the hard work, innovation and resolve of our people. Something that, in time, might come to be appreciated and recognised as unique, of this place.

There are no guarantees, but through commitment and determination, we hope to one day become part of the culture and identity of this place, to capture its spirit in an enduring legacy” says Paul.

THANK YOU FOR FOLLOWING OUR JOURNEY.



Husk Pure Cane mixes easily with ginger beer and lime.



OUR MOST AWARDED SPIRIT



Pure Cane Tasting Notes

BOLD & GRASSY

NOSE: Fresh sugar cane, unrefined brown sugar, hints of exotic fruit, white blossom flower and vanilla

TASTE: Crisp grassy taste, gently tingling with sweet fruit followed by a light creaminess and liquorice notes

FINISH: Very clean and dry finish with sugar cane and lingering tangy notes on the palate

Food pairing: BBQ chicken and Asian food

SUGGESTED SIMPLE SERVES

Pure Cane, ginger beer & lime

Mix 30ml Husk Pure Cane over ice with premium Australian ginger beer and a big squeeze of lime.

Cuba Libre (White Rum & Coke)

Mix 30ml Husk Pure Cane over ice with coke and a big squeeze of lime.

Daiquiri

Add 60ml Husk Pure Cane, 30ml fresh lime juice, 20ml simple syrup to a shaker half filled with ice. Shake hard and strain into a coupe glass.

Ti' Punch

In a small glass add 1/2 tsp raw sugar. Slice a small lime coin - you want mostly the lime skin rather than the flesh. Squeeze and drop the lime over the sugar and swirl to partially dissolve. Pour over 45ml Husk Pure Cane. Add ice if you like. Stir well - sip slowly.

