

special



desperate need of a serious quality contender. As well as appealing to its core and traditional consumers, Fruit Cup will help Plymouth to effectively target disaffected Pimm's consumers - me for one - as well as a second, younger market. Plymouth Gin Fruit Cup can be served with lemonade for a classic taste or, due to its traditional strength, can be enjoyed with ginger ale or bitter lemon for an interesting twist.

Fruit Cup is based on the same heritage and quality on which Plymouth Gin has built its reputation, and from which it continues its strategy of offering consumers high quality, traditional, English gin products.

While, for me at any rate, that's the joyous news, there are other delights that are sure to quench many a thirst. It must be intriguing for those who bask in all-the-year-round sunshine, to see how excited we in northern Europe get about summer. But then we do have to endure pretty dismal weather the rest of the year, and as soon as the barometer registers 'warmer' there's a distinct change in outlook, and of what's in the drinks cabinet. I've already bought in my first consignment of Coca-Cola and do confess I've had my first summer-time Cuba Libre.

The sun was, amazingly, shining (so no stiff upper lip required) and the first barbecue of the year was underway.

Several bottles of rosé were cooling in the frigo and spirits were riding high - thanks in part to the Cuba Libres (made with Havana Club) which were going down a treat, and of course the weather.

As a spirit, rum enjoys a certain duality. It's good and warming in winter and seriously refreshing in summer, so it's not locked into one season or t'other. There's also a lot happening in the rum arena - take the Mexican-based Destileria Porfidio. Although better known for its top quality Tequilas, the producer has turned its attentions to rum and has launched a top quality single cane rum on to the international stage.

Porfidio Triple Distilled Plata Rum has already caused a stir Stateside, where it made its debut at the Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America convention in Florida. In keeping with its established reputation for producing 100% agave Tequilas of the highest quality - most notably the Aged Añejo Single Barrel Tequila which is distilled from pure, undiluted



'Rum is not locked into one season or t'other - it enjoys a seasonal duality'

blue agave juice - Porfidio Rum is derived from only the finest ingredients, using traditional production processes, to create a product of true quality. For starters, apparently no other rum in the world is produced using the Alambique still.

"Our philosophy is that a high quality product cannot be made from inferior ingredients. The key to our entire production process, from harvest right through to bottling, is quality," said export director, Carlos Camacho. "We will accept no compromise - it is that simple. As a result, we consider Porfidio Rum to be the best white rum available on earth."

Mind it does come at a price, that is around US\$50, but then it is presented in hand-blown bottles which, with the distinctive motif of the agave Tequila cactus, is very definitely of the Porfidio family. Porfidio Rum is already available in travel retail markets in the Americas and hopefully further afield soon.

There's also much activity this summer in the Virgin Island-based Cruzan Rum camp. First, its bespoke bar at Fort Lauderdale Hollywood airport, and now there are some mouth-watering cocktails (see Box).

However no summer would be complete without a decent Gin & Tonic.

There are some 'good' gins around these days too. Tanqueray 10, Bombay Sapphire, and G&J Greenall's to name but a few. Then of course there's the redoubtable Beefeater. Though I have to say that while an idea of heaven, for me, would be to see a silver salver bearing the perfect Beefeater and Schweppes tonic, equally my nightmare would be if said salver was sporting Wet by Beefeater and tonic instead.



Summer Cocktails with Cruzan Rum

Cruzan Mango Mai Tai
1 part Cruzan Mango Rum
1 part Cruzan Dark Rum
2 parts pineapple juice
heavy splash of Amaretto
Shake with ice and pour into martini glass.

Mango Mojito
Cruzan Mango Rum
Fresh Mango
Mint leaves
Sprite or 7-Up
Muddle the mint leaves and add the remaining ingredients to a highball glass. Shake with ice and garnish with a mango or lime slice