

### Porfidio takes the new oak route

**L**aunching itself with gusto into the super premium rum category, Mexico's Destileria Porfidio will use the IAADEFS show in Orlando, March 22-25, to showcase three new rums for the first time. As well as a 70% abv Distillation Strength partner for the Porfidio Triple-Distilled Plata Single Cane Rum – launched last year – the company will reveal two barrel aged formats – Single Barrel Añejo and Barrique Añejo, both aged for five years in new oak.

Destileria Porfidio's founder and owner, Martin Graessl, explains that the two aged products will be the first rums on the market to be aged 100% in virgin oak barrels – American, from Oregon, in the case of Single Barrel Añejo, and French Limousin for Barrique Añejo. A typical, used barrel costs \$30, according to Graessl, so the \$200-plus cost of an unused cask explains why no other producer has previously gone down this route.

This investment is certainly reflected in the retail price of the new rums – about \$50 for Single Barrel Añejo and \$120 for Barrique Añejo, putting it on a par with Johnnie Walker Blue. "My focus is exclusively on quality," states Graessl – an Austrian who exploited a family link with eau-de-vie production to move to Mexico in 1991, with the express intention of producing super premium tequilas and rums.

"We need 80 litres of fresh sugar cane to make one litre of our rum, compared to just five litres of molasses for regular products," says Graessl. "Contrary to regular rum, which is made from molasses, a by-product of sugar refining, Porfidio Single Cane Rum is made from the juices of freshly pressed sugar cane. Thus our rum is not made from a waste product, but from the real thing."

#### Matusalem adds Solera 7 to range

Ron Matusalem is launching the latest addition to its premium range – Solera 7 – two years after introducing its Clasico and Platino extensions. The 7 year-old golden rum is produced in a sherry-style solera system, with barrels being topped up as the levels fall during the ageing process.

Presented in a 70cl bottle embossed with the company's dove logo, Matusalem Solera 7 retains the producer's hallmark, ultra-smooth style with flavours of molasses, vanilla and caramel. President and CEO of Matusalem & Co., Dr Claudio Alvarez, said: "We are very pleased that we have



Porfidio's new, aged rums spend time in virgin oak barrels from Oregon and Limousin, rather than old, used casks

Similarly, Graessl distinguishes Porfidio from the 'rhum agricole' products made on the French Caribbean islands, notably Martinique: "We press fresh sugar cane, not burned sugar cane. Contrary to rhum agricole, when we press sugar cane it is undiluted with water, thus the pure cane juices are fermented." Also, Porfidio is distilled by the alambique method which allows the head and tails of the distillate to be separated, unlike the rhum agricole column still method.

Distribution for the new Porfidio trio will be primarily in the US and the Caribbean islands. "I'm marketing initially into hotels, restaurants and duty free," says Graessl, "but we are obliged to put it into US stores too. We're looking at other markets, mainly Italy and the UK, for the second half of 2004. They really know their rums in Italy – it's one of the biggest per capita consumers of rum."

captured the traditional Cuban rum heritage in all our brands, and Solera 7 is no exception."

Ron Matusalem was founded in Cuba in 1872 by the Camp brothers, Benjamin and Eduardo, who applied their knowledge of European spirits production to the rum process. The biblical name of Methuselah was chosen to convey the importance of the ageing process. Matusalem is now produced in the Dominican Republic, following the confiscation of the company's original family assets in Cuba by the Castro government in the 1960s.



City

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