



NEWS RELEASE

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ROCHESTER, N.Y. — A new aged rum from Panama has come ashore in North America, christened with Double Gold, Innovation, and Best of Show awards upon its landing. Auténtico Nativo Aged Rum is infiltrating the American market this spring, following launch events in Miami, Key West, and Detroit. Launches in New York City and Tampa will uncork in June.

Nativo is a true-aged rum with expressions at 15 years and 20 years — meaning the age you see on the label is 100 percent minimum age of the liquid in the bottle. A third expression, Nativo Over Proof, is a blend of various ages of rum. The Nativo collection is deliciously meeting the demands of discerning consumers actively seeking artfully crafted aged rums.

Rum experts and mixologists have been raving about the taste experience of Nativo. At the 2019 SIP Awards in May, Nativo expressions earned Double Gold, Gold, and Platinum honors, as well as the 2019 Innovation Award for the 20-year expression. Consumer judges present the Innovation Award to a spirit they “deem innovative and groundbreaking” with “an interesting and unique taste profile or design.”

“The rich sugars and baking spices of the 15, the complexity of the savory herbs of the 20, and the subtle chocolate notes of the Over Proof make for a diverse and nuanced line,” said Nick Britsky, spirits connoisseur and reviewer at nickdrinks.com, following Nativo’s Detroit launch. “With all the lawlessness in the rum world, it’s refreshing and delicious to see Nativo produce a product with no added colors or flavors. BRAVO!”

Produced through ROC House Brands, Nativo is rooted in the sugar-cane rich terroir of Panama, which offers ideal barrel-aging conditions in extreme natural temperatures between 80 and 105 degrees. A native Central American quote says, “The land does not belong to you, you belong to the land.” The natural gifts of Panama are responsible for Nativo’s essence.

“We are proud to join arms with Auténtico Nativo and bring this award-winning aged rum to the North American market,” said Joe Ragazzo, Vice President of ROC House Brands, a division of LiDestri Food and Drink. “ROC House Brands has been expanding its spirits portfolio, and Nativo is quickly becoming a flagship product making waves and creating extreme excitement.”

According to *IWSR Magazine*, dark rums accounted for more than 80 percent of the premium-plus rum category last year and recorded volume growth of 8 percent. The latest brands on the market have involved focused product development and innovation.

In the book *Rum Curious* (2017, Voyageur Press) author Fred Minnick called rum the most difficult spirit to master, from the production end. “We want a story and rum certainly has one to tell,” he wrote.

Nativo has quite a story ...

The rum and its master

Nativo is created using exclusive Caribbean rums with no preservatives and no added coloring. The expertise and mastermind behind Nativo is legendary rum distiller Francisco “Don Pancho” Fernandez, who studied under Cuban masters, including his father.

“This formula is exclusively for Nativo and is a very complete portfolio for the launch of a new brand,” Don Pancho said in May at the Miami launch party for Nativo. “To have three expressions while making yourself known in the American market, as well as proper distribution, is very good.”

What is the secret to Nativo’s success? Don Pancho said Nativo simply speaks for itself.

“Much tasting is what will sell this product,” he said. “Try it, try it, try it!”

Don Pancho’s reputation precedes him in rum circles. According to Liquor.com, “His association goes a long way with rum nerds.”

After a four-decade career in Cuba, Don Pancho relocated 25 years ago to Pese, Panama, a region known for its sugar cane. The hand-harvested sugar cane, from which Nativo is made, is grown in the mineral-rich volcanic soil of the Herrera Region of Panama, which is located between the Pacific Ocean and tropical rain forests.

Nativo has achieved its essence and near-perfect balance using traditional Cuban methods of blending and distillation and a non-Solera system. The rum is double-distilled in a copper column still and aged in ex-bourbon oak barrels — which are stored vertically and baptized in fire to revive the trapped compounds of previous rums.

“There are no rums that resemble ours,” said Ricardo Gonzalez, co-founder of Nativo. “Nativo has an exclusivity. Don Pancho has done a tremendous job in the formulation of Auténtico Nativo, creating something very unique in the rum market.”

Gonzalez said Nativo has access to Don Pancho’s inventory of rums and assures rum lovers that Nativo has enough reserves of barrel-aged rum for the American market and beyond.

“ROC House Brands realized the potential of this brand and we have worked very closely together to bring it to fruition,” Gonzalez said. “I am very happy that this is the beginning of something great happening in the United States.”

Awards: Best of Show!

Nativo has been deemed by judges and rum connoisseurs as favorable for mixing, as well as sipping. Awards earned thus far:

- SIP Awards, May 2019:
 - 2019 Innovation Award (20 year)
 - Double Gold (15 year)
 - Gold (20 year)
 - Platinum (Over Proof)
- WSWA (Wine Spirits Wholesalers Association), April 2019:
 - Best of Show and Double Gold (20 year)
 - Gold (15 year and Over Proof)
- Miami Rum Renaissance Festival, May 2019:
 - Best of Show and Gold (15 Year)
 - Gold (Over Proof)
- Madrid International Rum Festival, 2018: Double Gold (15 year)
- German Rum Award Conference, 2018: Gold (15 year) and Silver (20 year)
- The Rum and Cachaca Masters, 2018: Silver (15 year)
- Gold Ink Awards, 2018: Pewter Award for Innovative Labels and Packaging (Nativo family)

The Auténtico Nativo Collection

For the 15 year and 20 year expressions, the product in the bottle is a mix made with rum reserves that have been aged for at least those years. Auténtico Nativo Over Proof 108° is a high-proof, full-bodied distinctive rum.

- **Nativo 15 Años**
 - Color: Brilliant dark amber/mahogany
 - Nose: Port wine, cherries, honey nuts, toasted oak
 - Flavor Profile: Sweet honey, oak, cocoa, and citrus fruits
 - Imbibe: Sipped neat or on the rocks
- **Nativo 20 Años**
 - Color: Deep dark amber
 - Nose: Lively, toasty aromas of dark roasted nuts, caramelized peaches, and bananas
 - Flavor Profile: The oak spice, and minerals, whole nuts, toasted cedar, and oak
 - Imbibe: Sipped neat, on the rocks, 1 to 2 splashes of water, with a cigar
- **Nativo Over Proof**
 - Color: Soft red amber
 - Nose: Despite the high proof, the bouquet is nicely balanced with toffee, vanilla, and dark fruits
 - Flavor Profile: Exceptionally smooth, sweet, deep, complexity of toffee, molasses, dried black figs, oak char, vanilla, tobacco, and cinnamon
 - Imbibe: In cocktails, neat, with a splash of water, on the rocks, with a cigar

Attn. Media:

High-res images and video are online at **Nativorum.com**

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