

SEMINAR AGENDA

FRIDAY, SEP 18TH, 2026
LIMITED TO V.I.P. ONLY

1:30 PM | "Hands On" rum making event

GUEST SPEAKER: EARL BROWN

Location: Wright & Brown Distillery

Brief: Join Master Distiller Earl Brown for a hands-on, end-to-end look at traditional rum production. This live demonstration covers every key phase of the craft: mashing raw molasses, managing an active fermentation, and executing a stripping run—the crucial first stage of the double-distillation process.

SAT, SEP 19TH, 2026

1:30 PM | When In Rhum
GUEST SPEAKER: KATE PERRY

Brief: This seminar invites you to slow down and sip with intention. Together we will explore a selection of curated releases ****from the La Maison & Velier portfolio, including meaningful bottles, special sips and stories led by Kate Perry (@wheninrhum)

2:30PM | Independent Bottlers
Small to large scale

GUEST SPEAKERS: JEFF DIEGO, SETH BENHAIM & RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ

Brief: Independent bottlers are the creative engine of the spirits world, acting as curators who unearth hidden gems and push stylistic boundaries. Whether operating as a boutique family passion project or a large-scale international house, these bottlers provide a unique lens through which to view established categories. By sourcing rare single casks, experimenting with unconventional finishes, and prioritizing transparency, they offer expressions that mainstream distilleries simply cannot. This seminar explores how independent bottlers—regardless of size—drive innovation, preserve liquid history, and deliver the one-of-a-kind projects that keep the global spirits community evolving.

3:30PM | Mexican Rums: Terroir and Uniqueness

GUEST SPEAKER: JEFF DIEGO

Brief: Once a hidden gem in the spirits world, Mexican rum is rapidly gaining global acclaim. Join Jeff Diego as he explores the rich diversity and distinct terroir that make these rums so exceptional. Learn how regional microclimates, traditional techniques, and sugarcane varieties shape the bold, complex flavors of the exciting new Mexican rums emerging today.



CALIFORNIA RUM FESTIVAL & CONGRESS

Nicoya
RON DE COSTA RICA

Dos Maderas
AGED RUM

SEPT 19TH & 20TH 2026



9 Anchor Dr,
Emeryville,
CA 94608

SUN, SEP 20TH, 2026

2:00PM | Costa Rica Single Estate Rum:
Combining pure juice, molasses & sugarcane honey.

GUEST SPEAKER: PIERRE BARDINET

Brief: Pierre Bardinet shares the story behind the creation of the first Costa Rican single-estate rum. From an uncompromising focus on raw material to the art of blending, he explores how three major rum traditions: pure cane juice, molasses, and sugar cane honey can be combined to build complexity, balance, and identity. A deep dive into terroir, technique, and the power of assemblage.

3:00 PM | The American Rum Spotlight Series

GUEST SPEAKERS: RYAN GILBERTIE, SETH BENHAIM AND EARL BROWN

Brief: This 3rd installment of The American Rum Spotlight Series will be the first done live from the 2026 California Rum Fest & Congress!

Rum may have been America's first commercial spirit but after generations in the shadow of bourbon and tequila a new wave of ambitious distillers and independent bottlers is finally giving the category the attention it deserves. Our live spotlight will explore this resurgence through conversations with 3 players at the center of the burgeoning American rum industry: Earl Brown, co-founder of Oakland based Wright & Brown Distilling Company, Seth Benhaim, founder Mainland American Rum Company, and Ryan Gilbertie, founder of CA distribution company Superlative Spirits.

4:00 PM | Planteray Extreme Series VI - The Legends of Rum

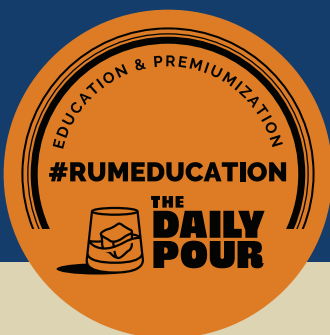
GUEST SPEAKER: ADRIENNE STONER

Brief: Maison Ferrand invites you into the world of rum taken to its absolute limits. This masterclass explores Extreme Series VI – Legends of Rum, a collection of rums that are as rare as they are uncompromising. Bottled straight from the cask at natural proof, each expression preserves the raw, unfiltered soul of a unicorn barrel from Alexandre's personal stock. Created only every two to three years, the Extreme Series celebrates flavour intensity, authenticity, and rarity. This sixth edition is a tribute to the legendary distillers and blenders who have shaped Alexandre Gabriel's 35-year journey through rum terroirs. Through lifelong friendships and shared craftsmanship, these masters passed down techniques, stories, and vision. During this session, guests will taste three exceptional expressions from the collection.

5:00 PM | Boom, Bust, and Rebirth: Cycles in Distilled Spirits

GUEST SPEAKER: FEDERICO J. HERNÁNDEZ & JEFF DIEGO

Brief: This seminar examines the ups, downs, and revivals of rum during the years. In this context, we'll see how today's trends in pricing (bars and consumers), bottle sizes, and evolving cocktail culture are steering the next cycle.



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MUST BE 21 OR OVER
TO ATTEND ALL EVENTS.

6:00 PM | Inside The Main Rum Company: The Casks Behind the Bottles

GUEST SPEAKER: MITCH WILSON

Brief: Some of the most exciting independent bottlings are selected from the warehouses of The Main Rum Company.

For decades, Main Rum has quietly sourced, matured and supplied exceptional casks from across the Rum-producing world, working with independent bottlers and established brands to bring these liquids to market.

Join Mitch Wilson, Head of Global Rum Development at The Main Rum Company and E&A Scheer, for a rare look behind the scenes. Guests will taste a specially selected line-up of cask samples while exploring how origin, marque, distillation, maturation climate, age and cask history shape the character of a Rum.

Mitch will also explain how Main Rum evaluates and manages its stocks, how bottlers select the right casks, and what happens between the first sample and the finished release.

This is an opportunity to taste Rums rarely available to the public and discover one of the industry's most important – but least visible – companies through the liquid itself.



MITCH
WILSON



KATE
PERRY

GUEST SPEAKERS



ADRIENNE
STONER



RAFAEL
RODRÍGUEZ



SETH
BENHAIM



PIERRE
BARDINET



EARL
BROWN



FEDERICO
HERNANDEZ



RYAN
GILBERTIE



JEFF
DIEGO



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