



RCS RUMZCAL:

Harmony of Rum and Mezcal Together

Written by Allison Levine

Don The Beachcomber, the father of tiki culture, would say “what one rum can do, three can do better.” This adage applied to mixing different rums together to enhance the flavor of the drink. This is the idea behind split cocktails in which the main liquor component in a cocktail is split between two or more ingredients. Whether splitting the base in the same spirit category or unexpected spirit combinations, split based cocktails can enhance the flavor of a cocktail. And that is what Ron Colón Salvadoreño’s (RCS) newest Rumzcal offers in one bottle.



The combination of Rum and Mezcal may not seem like they belong together. Sweet rum and smoky Mezcal are not typically combined in classic cocktails. However, RCS was inspired by brand fans like Shannon Mustipher, who wrote in a *Saveur* Article "After experimenting with different spirit categories, the "a-ha" moment came when I mixed mezcal with rum agricole to create Song of The Siren, my own edgy yet true-to-form mai tai riff. On paper, the ingredients don't appear to belong together, as there are no precedents for the combination among classic cocktails; many people consider Mezcal to be smoky and rum to be sweet. But in the right pairing, the two can produce a drink that is pungent and refreshing yet retains an earthy element, merging beautifully on the palate."

From the start, RCS has been bridging worlds with their rums. Max Abbott UK Brand Director RCS explained, "At Ron Colón, it has always been our goal to bridge worlds. With our rum portfolio we connected rum & coffee, bringing together the two finest raw ingredients exported from El Salvador. Next, we

created RumRye, building upon the heritage of early American distilling by mixing Rum and Rye Whiskey. Combining Rum and Mezcal is a natural pairing as RCS continues to innovate on rum bridging industries and categories to create new flavor experiences."

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The story of Ron Colón Salvadoreño started with founders Thurman Wise and Pepijn Janssens. After years of conversations to create their own rum brand, the small country of El Salvador captured their attention while on a 22-day, 16-country barhop across Latin America in 2018. A rum passion project



with origins in El Salvador and the ambition to create a high-proof rum designed with bartenders in mind was the beginning of the story of Ron Colón Salvadoreño.

Sugar, which has played an important role throughout history, is an important product in El Salvador. When the colonists traded with Native Americans, rum was often used as currency. In the 17th century, sugarcane and its associated products were of such significance that wars would be fought over it. To blend their rum, the Ron Colón team source from Licorera Cihuatán, a distillery that is part of Ingenio La Cabaña of El Salvador, one of the largest and oldest sugar producers in the country since 1920. The local sugarcane is run through a 100-year-old sugar cane mill and converted to molasses. The molasses is fermented with proprietary yeasts for 36 hours and then distilled in a modern multi-column still. After distillation, the rum is aged in former bourbon white oak barrels.



Ron Colón Salvadoreño Dark Aged Rum, a 111-proof Dark Aged Rum, and Ron Colón Salvadoreño Coffee Infused Rum are high proof rums with intense flavors that pay homage to El Salvador's culture. Coffee, El Salvador's biggest export product, was first introduced to El Salvador in the 1880s and became the chief export of the country by the 1920s, accounting for 90 percent of all of El Salvador's exports. Ron Colón Coffee Infused Dark Aged Rum, made with a coffee infusion of bourbon varietal coffee beans farmed and harvested in El Salvador, showcases the beautiful synergy between rum and coffee.

RCS RumRye was the third addition to the portfolio, showcasing both spirits side by side and creating a new category. RumRye is a blend is 50% Ron Colón Salvadoreño Dark Aged Rum and 50% 2017 American Straight 100% Rye Whiskey, bottled at 50% ABV, 100 Proof.

The newest flavor combination is the unique Rumzcal 99, a blend of the Ron Colón Dark Aged Rum and Maguey Espadín Mezcal, which comes from the Lopez Real Distillery in Oaxaca. The Lopez Real distillery is a fourth-generation

family business that has created one of the best Mezcal for the past six decades.

The Lopez Real Distillery is run by Antonio Lopez Mateo and his mother Sabina Mateo Ramirez, the maestra mezcalera. The family business was first started by Antonio's great grandfather, Cosme Lopez, who was the first member of the family who dedicated himself to the elaboration of Mezcal. Due to a lack of resources, he did not have a 'palenque' (factory) of his own until his son Cosme, the second generation, built his 'palenque' in 1963. Cosme's two sons, Cosme Lopez III and Mario Lopez, Antonio's father, continued the tradition.

When Mario Lopez married Sabina Mateo Ramirez, he decided to separate from his family to build his own 'palenque' on a piece of land that he had inherited from his father. However, with Mezcal not seen as a highly valued product, Mario emigrated to the United States to look for work. He returned to Oaxaca and with the capital that he managed to raise in the US, he improved the facilities of the 'palenque' and planted agave in his lands.

Don Mario Lopez passed away in 2021,

leaving his legacy to his third son Antonio Lopez Mateo who learned to make mezcal from a young age. Together with his mother, they run the company and fulfill the goals of respecting and caring for the traditional methods, the land, and the community.

With three different agaves (magueyes) in their production, Espadín (*A. angustifolia* Haw), Cuishe (*A. karwinskii* Zucc), and Tobalá (*A. potatorum*), the Lopez Real Distillery utilizes artisanal methods in the production of the mezcal starting with the sowing and harvesting of the agave. The cutting, or 'jima', of the agave leaves, or 'pencas', is done with rudimentary tools such as machetes, the 'coa' (a handmade wooden & metal tool), axes, and handmade mallets, in order to get the sweet heart of the agave, also known as the 'piña'.

To cook the 'piñas', which takes five or six days, they use a stone-lined conical shaped floor oven covered with dirt. The cooked 'piñas' are ground using a Chilean horse-drawn mill and the juices and fibers are poured into wooden vats for fermentation. Depending on the climate, the local yeasts naturally ferment



the wort, usually taking approximately three days. The final step is the double distillation in copper stills.

Rumzcal is crafted with 66% Ron Colón Dark Aged Rum and 33% Maguey Espadin Mezcal, finished at a 99 proof. This unique expression brings together the aromas and tastes of rum with an authentic taste of Mexico. This can seem like an odd combination. However, some of the best mezcal cocktails incorporate unexpected ingredients that enhance mezcal's flavors. Rum and Mezcal together produce a drink that is pungent and refreshing yet retains an earthy element. The flavors merge beautifully on the palate as exemplified in three signature Rumzcal cocktails. If one person is already sold its Katy Wallace, the USA Brand Director for RCS, who said "the only Mezcal I will drink is Rumzcal."

When it comes to creating split base cocktails, Ron Colón Salvadoreño offers



unique products that are the number one choice. With RumRye and Rumzcal offering already blended spirits, the customer can enjoy consistency when creating new flavor profiles that will enhance their cocktails.

"Our vision is to showcase different flavors, industries and processes; blending two styles together to create new experiences, both in a drink and in life," explains Janssens. "It's a postmodern treatment of rum where varieties and origins are merged, categories fade, hybrids appear and our unique brand ethos 'to bridge worlds' comes to life."

RCS RUMZCAL

RUMZCAL COCKTAILS

RUMZCAL NEGRONI

30 ml RUMZCAL
30 ml Campari
30 ml sweet vermouth
Add all ingredients to a mixing pint. Add ice and stir. Strain into a rocks glass over fresh ice and garnish with an orange twist. Cheers to the bar and enjoy.



DAIQUIRITA

60 ml RUMZCAL
20 ml lime juice
15 ml simple syrup
2 dashes orange bitters
Add all ingredients to a shaker. Add ice and shake. Strain into a cocktail coup. Garnish with a lime wheel. Cheers to the bar and enjoy.



WHERE THE SUN SHINES AKA LATIN BOILERMAKER

1 Latin American or Caribbean lager
1 shot RUMZCAL
Fill a shot glass with Ron Colon Rumzcal. Open a cold bottle of Latin American or Caribbean Lager. Cheers to the bar and enjoy.

