



The Search for the ultimate mai tai

Kevin Crossman
UltimateMaiTai.com



Kevin Crossman

Based in the San Francisco Bay Area

IT Manager by Day, Mai Tai Enthusiast at Night

Visited 130+ different tiki since 2016

 @ultimatemaitai

 www.ultimatemaitai.com



Logo and Banner by B-Rex



THE SEARCH FOR THE ULTIMATE MAI TAI

Traveling the Bay Area and beyond to find the best Mai Tai in the world! Tiki, cocktails, and adventures by Kevin Crossman

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The Search for the Ultimate Mai Tai in the San Francisco Bay Area by **Kevin Crossman**

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Big Island of Hawaii: Mai Tai and Tiki Bar Travel Guide

Central California Tiki Bar Travel Guide

Las Vegas Mai Tai and Tiki Bar Travel Guide

Honolulu: Mai Tai and Tiki Bar Travel Guide

Palm Springs Tiki Bar Travel Guide

Seattle-Tacoma Tiki Bar Travel Guide

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THE



ULTIMATEMAITAI.COM

About this Website

The Search for the Ultimate Mai Tai started when the [original website](#) launched in late 1998. We implemented a crude interactive website and received review submissions from Mai Tai fans globally. But, that website ceased active production a few years later and sat dormant for many years.

How Did We Get From Here to There?



And Back Again



The Mai Tai

Pop Quiz



Which of these is a Trader Vic's Mai Tai?

1 oz Lime Juice
1/2 oz Orgeat
1/4 oz Rock Candy Syrup
1/2 oz Orange Curacao
2 oz Aged Rum

Juice of one Lime (1 oz)
1/3 oz Orgeat
1/3 oz Rock Candy Syrup
1/3 oz Orange Curacao
1 1/2 oz Light Puerto Rican Rum
1 1/2 oz Dark Jamaican Rum

2 oz Pineapple Juice
1 oz Orange Juice
1/2 oz Orgeat
1/2 oz Orange Curacao
1 oz Light Rum
1 oz Dark Rum (float)

Which of these is a Trader Vic's Mai Tai?

1 oz Lime Juice ½ oz Orgeat ¼ oz Rock Candy Syrup ½ oz Orange Curacao 2 oz Aged Rum	Juice of one Lime ⅓ oz Orgeat ⅓ oz Rock Candy Syrup ⅓ oz Orange Curacao 1½ oz Light Puerto Rican Rum 1½ oz Dark Jamaican Rum	2 oz Pineapple Juice 1 oz Orange Juice ½ oz Orgeat ½ oz Orange Curacao 1 oz Light Rum 1 oz Dark Rum (float)
1944 Mai Tai	Original Hawaiian Mai Tai	2025 Royal Hawaiian Mai Tai

THE SEARCH FOR THE ULTIMATE MAI TAI

Traveling the Bay Area and beyond to find the best Mai Tai in the world! Tiki, cocktails, and adventures by Kevin Crossman

[Home](#) [Mai Tais](#) [Features](#) [Tiki Travels](#) [Tiki Bar Ratings](#) [About](#)

TRADER VIC'S HISTORY OF THE MAI TAI

Let's Set the Record Straight on the Mai Tai

by **Victor J. Bergeron "Trader Vic"**
San Francisco, 1970

Earlier this year, a long time friend from Tahiti, Carrie Guild (now Mrs. Howard Wright), sent me a column from a Honolulu newspaper which once again has raised the argument over where the Mai Tai was born and who originated it.

I originated the Mai Tai and have put together a bit of the background on the evolution of this drink, which has earned worldwide identification and acceptance.

There has been a lot of conversation over the beginning of this drink. Many have claimed credit, including Harry Owens. The people who now own Trader Vic's in Honolulu (which at this time has no connection with the Trader Vic operations on the mainland) claimed it was originated in Tahiti This aggravates my ulcer completely. The drink was never introduced by me in Tahiti except informally through our good friends, Eastham and Carrie Guild.

In 1944, after success with several exotic rum drinks, I felt a new drink was needed. I thought about all the really successful drinks; martinis, manhattans, daiquiris All basically simple drinks.

I was at the service bar in my Oakland restaurant. I took down a bottle of 17-year old rum. It was J. Wray & Nephew from Jamaica; surprisingly golden in color, medium bodied, but with the rich pungent flavor particular to the Jamaican blends.

The flavor of this great rum wasn't meant to be overpowered with heavy additions of fruit juices and flavorings. I took a fresh lime, added some orange curacao from Holland, a dash of Rock Candy Syrup, and a dollop of French Orgeat, for its subtle almond flavor. A generous amount of shaved ice and vigorous shaking by hand produced the marriage I was after.

Half the lime shell went in for color ... I stuck in a branch of fresh mint and gave two of them to Ham and Carrie Guild, friends from Tahiti, who were there that night.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Press Release, 1970

ultimatemaitai.com/about/history/



1944 Mai Tai

**The Original Formula
by Trader Vic
Bergeron, 1944**

2 ounces of 17-year-old J. Wray & Nephew Rum over shaved ice

$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce Holland DeKuyper Orange Curacao

$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce French Garnier Orgeat Syrup

$\frac{1}{4}$ ounce Rock Candy Syrup

Add juice from one fresh Lime.





**“The Mai Tai
is the perfect
foil for a
huge variety
of rums”**

Martin Cate &
Rebecca Cate,
Smuggler’s Cove

Second Adjusted Mai Tai Formula

Mid 1950s

1 oz Trader Vic's Jamaican Rum (15 or 8 yr)

1 oz Martinique Rhum (St. James or Trader Vic's)

1 oz pre-mixed Curacao, Orgeat and Rock Candy Syrup

Juice from one fresh lime

Mix and serve as in the original formula.

TRADER VIC'S MAI TAI RUM

My son, Vic, Jr., was discussing the fact that most rum drinks are made with a variety of several blends of rum, and this thought occurred to us: Why not, instead of the customer having four or five bottles of rum, let us blend it for them. Here we offer you in this package our "Mai Tai" Rum, a blend of Jamaican, Martinique, and Virgin Island rums. I hope you enjoy our "Mai Tai" rum.

**TRADER
VIC'S®**
COPR. 1959 BY TRADER VIC

*Mai Tai
Rum*
A Blend

A blend of the finest imported rums: Jamaican Rum, 70%; Martinique Rum, 20%; and Virgin Island Rum, 10%.

86 PROOF

PREPARED AND BOTTLED BY TRADER VIC'S PRODUCTS CO., SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

1970s Trader Vic's Recipe

Juice of 1 Lime

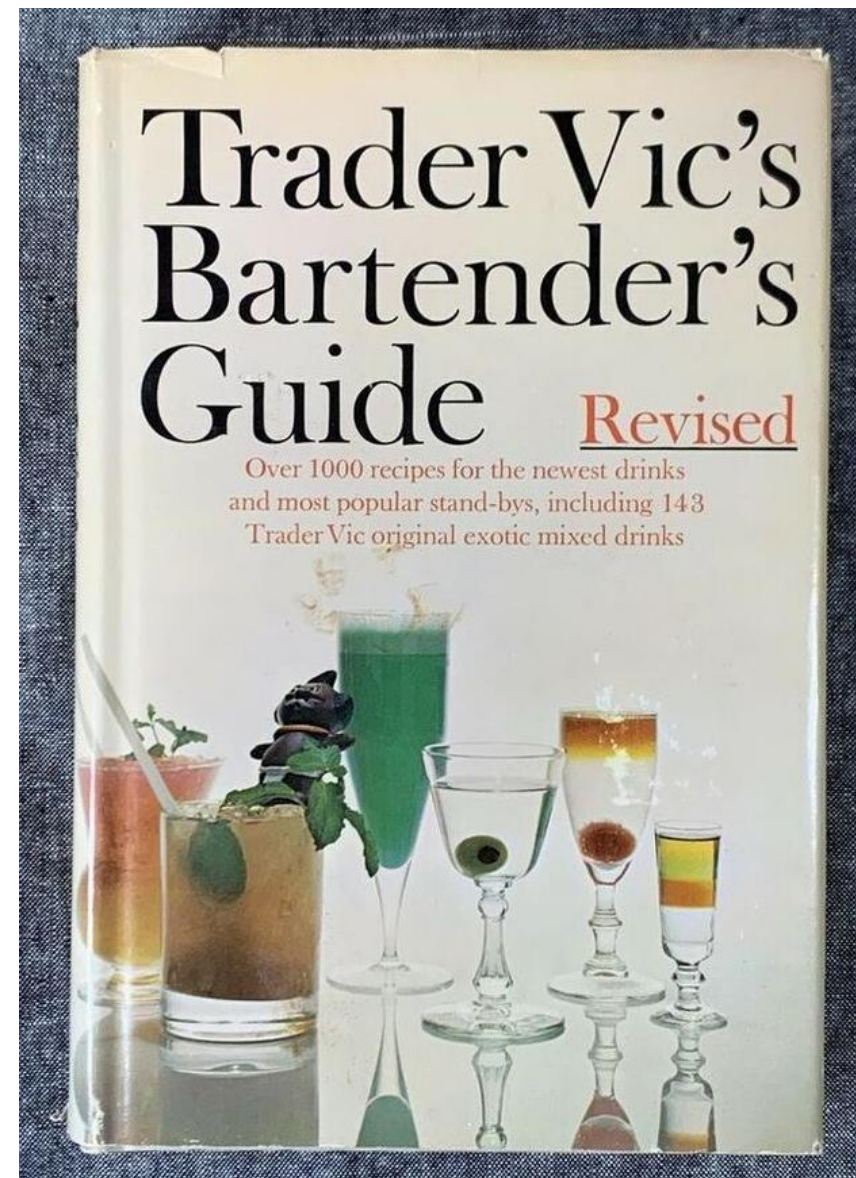
¼ oz Orgeat

¼ oz Rock Candy Syrup

½ oz Orange Curacao

2 oz Trader Vic's Mai Tai Rum

(or 1 oz Dark Jamaica rum / 1 oz Martinique Rhum)





Jamaica Rum and Martinique Rhum Agricole

Common
combination, thanks
in part to references
in books from Jeff
“Beachbum” Berry.

The Fink's OG Mai Tai

Aged Jamaican and
Agricole rums,
curacao, lime,
house orgeat



The Best Mai Tai in Napa?



1 oz Lime juice

½ oz Orgeat syrup

¼ oz Rock Candy Syrup

½ oz Orange Curacao liqueur

2 oz Rum

**Generic
1944 Mai Tai
Recipe**

Meanwhile in Hawai'i

I'll Make You Famous



Trader Vic Will Open His Trading Post on Thursday

Trader Vic's "trading post" on Ward St., just across that coconut tree shaded thoroughfare from the Old Plantation, will open next week as Honolulu's latest cafe and restaurant.

Opening date is next Thursday. And Trader Vic himself, a man who has roamed from Havana to the South Seas and back to California, says that this is his masterpiece as a setting for good food.

Vic Bergeron, to give him the name by which almost nobody knows him, arrived a few weeks ago to supervise the final details of the trading post, which is a combination of a cafe and a museum of marine and Polynesian curios, mementoes and objects of interest.

Under the grass thatched roof is a collection of anchors, lanterns, propellers and other reminders of the sea. The dishes were designed for his special use here and in his trading post at 6500 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, Cal.

Chinese Food—With Variations

Trader Vic's place here will specialize in Chinese food—"the kind that appeals to the American taste,"



TRADER VIC

he hastens to add.

There are only two exceptions—he will serve barbecued steak and barbecued squab.

The hours will be from 3 p. m. to 12 midnight—no exceptions save that Christmas Day and Thanksgiving Day are full holidays.

For the opening Thursday night, the "Mother" Bray troupe will perform. But it's not a dine-and-dance place—it's a dine and sup place. Usually there will be no music.

He sent from the mainland a chef and a bartender and these, with assistants, are training the local staff. When that's complete, he says, the local staff will take charge, the malihinis return to Oakland.

He's built a big Chinese barbecue oven.

The trading post phase is a real one. There'll be things to buy at Trader Vic's—curios, Hawaiian articles and the like. Nearby, on the street, there's plenty of parking space.

Trader Vic has been operating his Oakland establishment for six years. There as here, he denies that his place is a "night club."

"It's an eating resort for epicures," he says.

He has a staff of 25 and an initial investment of \$30,000 in land, buildings and equipment.

Trader Vic's in Hawaii

Trader Vic's Honolulu Opens December 19, 1940

Including a trading post

"An eating resort for epicures"

Staff of 25 and Investment of \$30,000

LTD.

Honolulu Star-Bulletin, December 14, 1940, page 6

Partnership Dissolved

*Honolulu Star-Bulletin, May 6,
1941, page 2*

ANNOUNCEMENT

Granville Abbott, Jr., and Vic Bergeron, who first established popular Trader Vic's in Honolulu, have dissolved their interests and Granville Abbott, Jr., has taken over entirely the establishment, including all drink recipes, dishes, etc., for which Trader Vic's has become famous with people who love good food and drink. The name Trader Vic's, in Honolulu, is the sole property of Granville Abbott, Jr.

As present seating accommodations are limited to 90 persons, it has been necessary in the past to disappoint many who wished to favor us with their patronage. We regret this fact and the management respectfully requests its patrons to telephone table reservations in advance so that it will not be necessary to refuse or delay service to anyone.

We are particularly desirous of having the Service Personnel get in touch with us in advance in order that in-so-far as we may be able to do so, they can be assured of accommodations.

Trader Vic's

Granville Abbott, Jr.

Owner and Manager

Telephone 5528

Trader Vic brings the
Mai Tai to Hawaii in
1953

The Royal Hawaiian Hotel
Moana Hotel

The Mai Tai was his
favorite!

Honolulu Star-Bulletin,
February 4, 1953

THE OL' TRADER is back in Ha-vhy-ee for his 25th expedition in nearly as many years . . . King of exotic



Trader Vic

concoctions, Vic Bergeron is the man behind the menehunes on the Royal's newly revised drink list . . . Trader Vic has never been a trader and he hasn't wandered much farther into Polynesia than Waikiki, but he's built Island paradises in San Francisco and Seattle and may be moving into Denver . . . An ex-partner runs the local Trader's, while Vic heads Trader Vic Enterprises and is consultant for several nighteries . . . His favorite drink is the Mai Tai, a heady concoction with a rum base. There's also the Kava Bowl, an exotic extravaganza served in a king-size container with vandas floating on the surface . . . The bowl was supported by four menehunes . . . what's needed is someone handy to support the drinker. After two, you probably wear the bowl on your head . . . Vic says his job gives him heartburn about once a week.

Royal Hawaiian Hotel Surf Room Menu

Royal Planters Punch

Kamaaina

Kava Bowl

Scorpion

Zombie

Tonga

Vanda Daiquiri

Pino Pepe

Mai Tai

Banana Cow

I am a menehune
and I have lived in these
islands long before
the Polynesians came.
I have moved the mountains,
dammed the rivers and
made the lakes.
I don't always do good deeds.
If you don't believe in
me I'll make it rain on you,
I'll stop your clock,
I'll give you a flat tire.
I have many kapus and if you
break one of my many kapus I can
put a kahuna on you.
I can keep the fish from biting on
your line when you go fishing.
You won't be able to
start your car in the morning
or maybe you won't be
able to find your cuff links.
Perhaps when you walk under
a coconut palm a
coconut will fall on your head.

Oh, I have many kahunas
and I'm going to put a kahuna on
The Royal Hawaiian Hotel
if these drinks aren't delicious.
Aloha,

high talking chief menehune

Surf Bar

THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN HOTEL • ON THE BEACH AT WAIKIKI



high talking chief menehune says

royal planters punch 1.10

I have blended pineapple and tropical fruit juices
with pungent, heavy rums and light rums,
making a flavorful drink for your enjoyment.

kamaaina 1.00

I mix the juice of green coconuts with gin, flavoring liqueurs
and a dash of lime juice and serve this in a baby coconut
just as the first settlers drank it many years ago.

kava bowl 1.50

My original Kava bowl, before the white man came,
was a heady potion. Now I blend light and dark rums
in place of okolehao—I think you'll enjoy it.

scorpion 1.50

I stole this from the kamaainas of the islands.
It is made from light rums and flavoring liqueurs.
Watch out! This is a favorite drink with us menehunes.

zombie 1.50

I sent one of my menehunes to the land of the Zombies.
At the risk of becoming a Zombie himself, he brought
back this magic brew. Beware of this in the hot sun.

tonga 1.00

From the Tonga Islands I have brought this favorite cooler—
a blend of light rums and tropical fruit juices.

vanda daiquiri 1.00

A favorite drink of lady menehunes —
mild, cooling and refreshing.

pino pepe 1.25

Every morning I send my menehunes to the pineapple
plantations to pick baby pineapples. We hollow them out
and fill them with rum and pineapple juice.

mai tai (meaning "Out of this World") 1.25

My chief helper brought this drink from Tahiti.
Made simply with fine old rums and fresh limes.

banana cow 75¢

Bananas from Kailua, blended with rum and fresh milk,
make this a wonderful early morning drink. I give this to my
young menehunes without the rum and you can do it, too.

royal planters punch 1.10

I have blended pineapple and tropical fruit juices
with pungent, heavy rums and light rums,
making a flavorful drink for your enjoyment.

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make this a wonderful early morning drink. I give this to my
young menehunes without the rum and you can do it, too.

Mrs. Edwin B. Hausfeld
4727 Glenway Ave.
Cincinnati 38, Ohio

Dear Hausfeld:

Your letter addressed to Jack Fischbeck of the Royal Hawaiian in Honolulu for reply. I am only too happy to send you the recipe for the Mai Tai as served here and at the Royal Hawaiian. Both Mr. Fischbeck and I are pleased that you have enjoyed this libation.

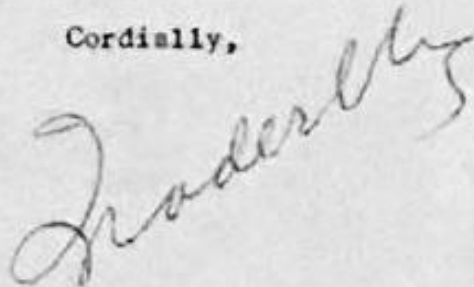
MAI TAI

Mix in 16 oz. tumbler with shaved ice:

Juice of one lime - drop half shell in glass
Dash of Rock Candy Syrup
Dash of Curacao
Dash of Orgeat Syrup
1½ oz. Trader Vic's Puerto Rico Rum
¾ oz. Meyer's Planters Punch Rum

Stir and decorate with fresh mint.

Cordially,



VJB:s

1956 Mai Tai

Juice of One Lime -
drop half lime shell
in glass

Dash of Rock Candy
Syrup

Dash of Curacao

Dash of Orgeat

1½ oz Trader Vic's
Puerto Rican Rum

¾ oz Myers's
Planters Punch Rum

Stir and decorate
with fresh mint



©VINTAGEHAWAII.ORG

Stan Delaplane (1961)

1 jigger Light Rum

1 jigger Dark Jamaica
Rum

Juice of One Lime

1 dash Orgeat

1 dash Simple Syrup

1 dash Orange Curacao

Garnish with sprig of mint,
sugar cane stick,
pineapple stick

Orlando Sentinel, May 7, 1961

Rum And Orchids

By STAN DELAPLANE

“GIVE US A recipe for mai tai you mention in your Hawaii columns . . .”

The Royal Hawaiian gives me this: “Jigger light rum, jigger dark Jamaica rum, juice of one lime (and drop half shell in the glass). Dash of Orgeat syrup, dash of rock candy syrup, dash of orange Curacao. Garnish with sprig of mint, sugar cane stick, pineapple stick and fill with shaved ice.”

The Halekulani omits the rock candy syrup and floats the dark rum on top.

Tiki Bob Bryant at the Tahitian Lanai uses light Puerto Rican rum and Lemon Heart Demerra rum on top. All use a king-size, old-fashioned glass and float a vanda orchid on top.

The mai tai (it means “the best” in Tahitian) was invented by Trader Vic in his Oakland, Calif., restaurant. It is a top favorite in the Islands.



**THE EXOTIC, IRRESISTIBLE RONRICO MAI-TAI.
(DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME MAKING IT.)**

Let one of those great Polynesian restaurants make it for you; they're experts. Let them make marvelously complicated Ronrico Scorpions, Babalus, Tonga Punches, Navy Grogs too. You, at home, can take Ronrico Rum and lead a simple life. Try this devastatingly dry rum with orange juice. (The Spanish Screwdriver.) With tomato juice. (The Bloody Maria... "Maria is Mary set to music.")

With tonic. With cider. With cola. With tea. (How good is Ronrico Rum? Take tea and see.) And of course, in dry Daiquiris. (Even people who profess not to like liquor like the taste of Ronrico: dry, light, clear and fragrant.) Got the idea? Got the Rum?

RONRICO PUERTO RICAN RUM, 80 PROOF. WHITE OR GOLD LABEL. MYERS'S JAMAICA RUM, 97 PROOF. GENERAL WINE AND SPIRITS CO., NEW YORK 22

RONRICO FROM PUERTO RICO: THE DRY RUM

1 ONE JIGGER RONRICO WHITE LABEL RUM 2 ONE JIGGER MYERS JAMAICA RUM 3 JUICE OF ONE LIME 4 ONE DASH ORGEAT 5 ONE DASH SIMPLE SUGAR SYRUP

Ronrico Mai-Tai (1962)

1 jigger Ronrico
White

1 jigger Myers's
Jamaica Rum

Juice of One Lime

1 dash Orgeat

1 dash Simple
Syrup

1 dash Orange
Curacao

In case you have wondered exactly what goes into some of those concoctions with the incredible names, the Moana graciously has come up with the answer.

Here's a collection of recipes that will make a great Christmas gift for the man who has everything, including the nerve to try these at home.

Mai Tai

1½ ounces light rum

1½ ounces dark rum

Juice of 1 lime
(leave ½ shell in
glass)

Dash Orgeat syrup

Dash Rock Candy
syrup

Dash Orange

Curacao

Garnish with a sprig of mint, sugar cane stick, and pineapple stick. Fill with shaved ice.

MOANA HOTEL RECIPE

Honolulu Star-Bulletin,
October 9, 1968

Generic Original Hawaiian Mai Tai Recipe

1 oz Lime Juice

$\frac{1}{3}$ oz Orgeat

$\frac{1}{3}$ oz Rock Candy Syrup

$\frac{1}{3}$ oz Orange Curacao

$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz Light Puerto
Rican Rum

$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz Dark Jamaican
Rum



Photo credit: Kamaaina56 Flickr Collection

1960s Mai Tais: Age of Transformation

Just Add Pineapple Juice...



on the waistline!

How simple! How light and refreshing!
Creamy cottage cheese and chilled
Dole Pineapple—every golden slice
from Hawaii, where the world's finest
pineapple is born and raised.

Have Dole Pineapple
on hand in your refrigerator
—chilled and ready to go!

Diamped Reed, Oahu, photographed by Tom Holliman for the Hawaiian Pineapple Co., Ltd., Honolulu



Taste the fresh difference in Libby's

—it's quick-packed in Hawaii



Give your family

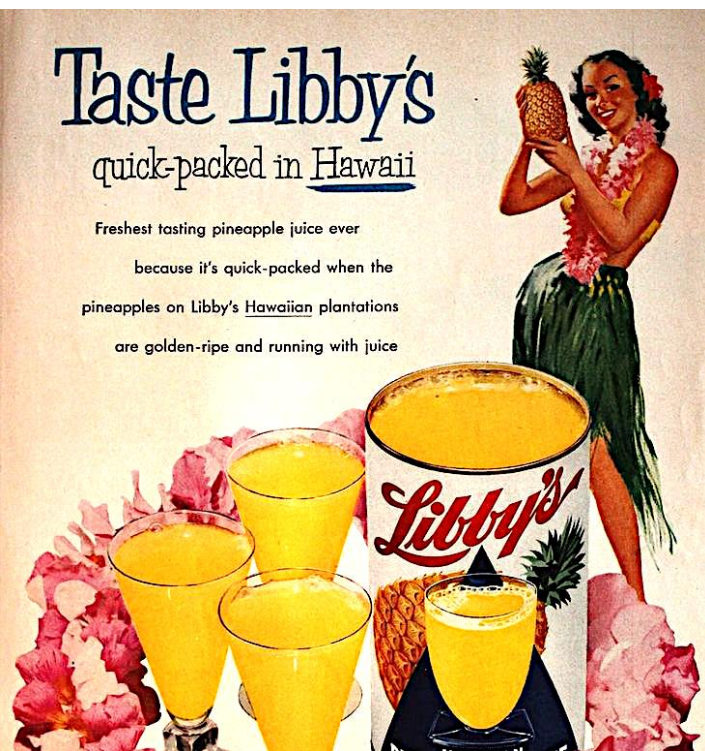
fresh from Hawaii's climate!

How could such fresh, fine quality pineapples come from the groves in Hawaii and not all the pine juice about a few minutes before serving? The best way, get Libby's Pineapple Juice!

Libby's Pineapple Juice is available in 12 oz. cans and 4 oz. cans. Libby's Pineapple Juice is available in 12 oz. cans and 4 oz. cans. Libby's Pineapple Juice is available in 12 oz. cans and 4 oz. cans.

Taste Libby's
quick-packed in Hawaii

Freshest tasting pineapple juice ever
because it's quick-packed when the
pineapples on Libby's Hawaiian plantations
are golden-ripe and running with juice



Come to your grocer's

DOLE HAWAIIAN HARVEST!

new crop! fresh-packed! rich! ripe!

**ALL HAWAIIAN PINEAPPLE
READY TO SERVE!**

At your grocer's **NOW!**

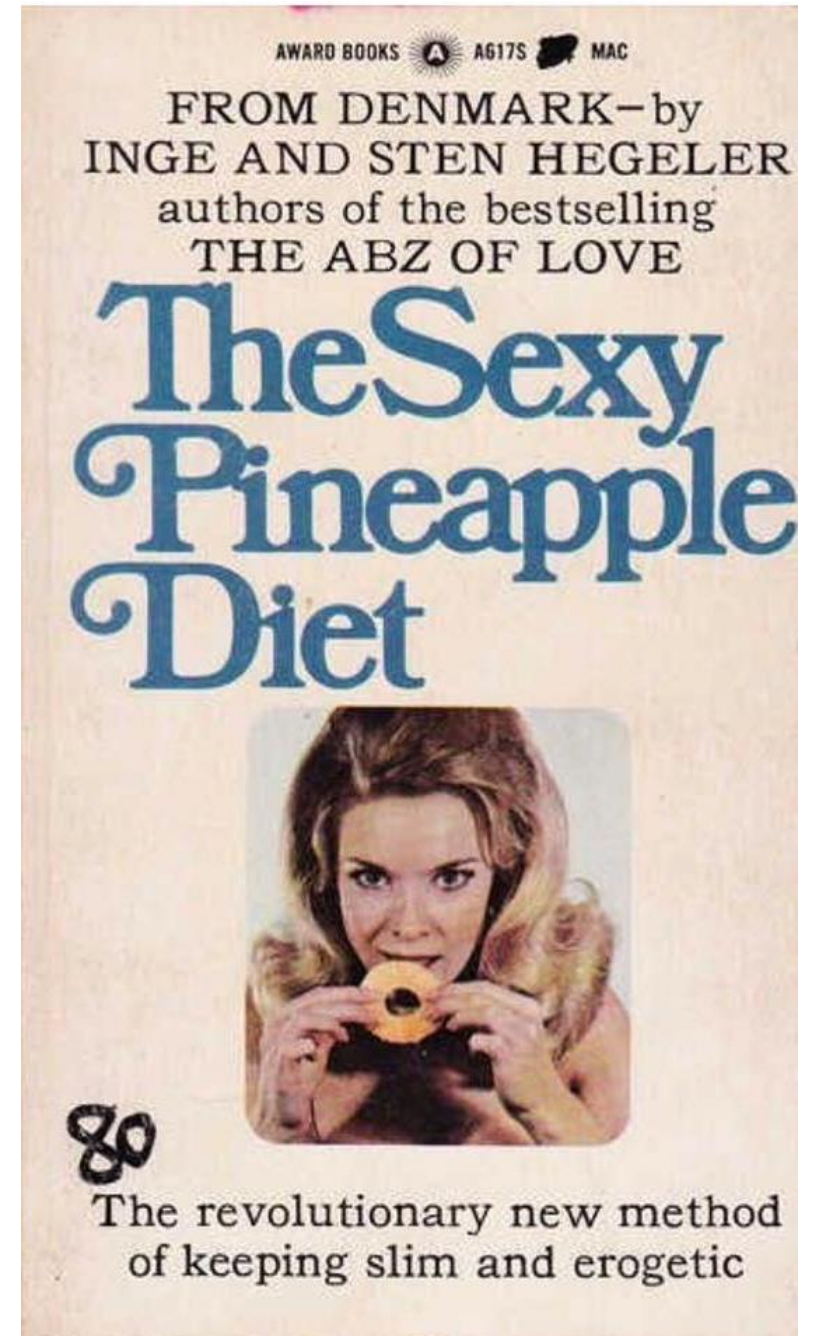
7 tempting varieties

WHY PINEAPPLE?



Perhaps there are other reasons for Pineapple's popularity

“The revolutionary new method of keeping slim and erogetic”



1961 Mai Tai

1½ oz Orange Juice
1½ oz Pineapple Juice
Juice of half a fresh
Lime
⅓ oz Orgeat
Dash Orange Curacao
1 oz Light Rum
Stir with crushed ice
and then add a float of
1 ounce of Dark Rum
Garnish with pineapple
spear and orchid

*Honolulu Star-Bulletin, April
23, 1961, page 62*

SPECIALTY of the HOUSE

(Henry Loui, proprietor of **The Kalia Gardens**, is an expert on concocting many things, among them, the Islands' famous mai tai, which means "very good.")

The mai tai is deceptive to drink, as well as to prepare.

Loui's theory is that "Most people have trouble with the rum. They either use too much or too little. The mai tai," he ob-

serves, "is a drink you build.")

MAI TAI

Put crushed ice in your mai tai glass or brandy snifter. Over the ice, put:

*1½ ounces orange juice
1½ ounces pineapple juice
⅓ ounce Orgeat syrup
dash of orange Curacao
juice of half a fresh lime
1 ounce light rum*

Stir the mixture. Add, but do not stir in:

1 ounce dark rum

You may spice the drink by adding a shaft of freshly cut pineapple. Garnish with an orchid blossom and serve.

The Royal Hawaiian Caves

Drinks of Hawaii, 2nd Edition, 1972

First published recipe with pineapple juice attributed to the Royal Hawaiian Hotel

1 oz Orange Juice	¼ oz Rock Candy Syrup
1 oz Pineapple Juice	¼ oz Orange Curacao
½ oz Fresh Lime Juice	1 oz Demerara Rum
¼ oz Fresh Lemon Juice	1 oz Dark Jamaican Rum
¼ oz Orgeat	1 oz Light Rum



Mai Tai

MAI-TAI BAR. Legend has it that this memorable bar in the Surf Room of the majestic Royal Hawaiian Hotel was the originator of the famous drink bearing its name. The Royal Hawaiian on the beach at Waikiki will never be surpassed in elegant charm and gracious beauty.

The world's second most enjoyable pastime, bikini watching, is the order of the day on the sun-drenched lanai fronting the SURF ROOM on Waikiki Beach. Try it, you'll like it.

The recipe quoted here, and now used by Sheraton, is probably even more potent than its predecessor — certainly more liberally laced with rum. One of these is bound to do twice the job of two almost anywhere else!

1 oz. Light Rum
1 oz. Dark Rum
1 oz. Demerara 86° Rum
¼ oz. Orange Curacao
Dash of Orgeat Syrup
Dash of Rock Candy Syrup
Juice of ½ Lime
¼ oz. Lemon Juice
Pineapple Juice
Orange Juice

Mix all ingredients with crushed ice in a 15½ oz. Mai Tai glass. Use equal parts of orange and pineapple juice. Garnish with a pineapple finger, sugar cane stick, a prize orchid and a sprig of mint.



**The
Hawaiian
Mai Tai is
Still Going
Strong**

The Old Way Mai Tai

Who knows what this is?





**"OLD WAY" MAI TAI FORMULA
1997**

1 ounce Fine Jamaican Rum (15 or 8 year old)
1 ounce Martinique Rum (St. James)
1/2 ounce Orange Curacao
1/2 ounce Orgeat Syrup
juice from one fresh lime (about 3/4 ounce)

Mix and serve as in the original formula.



**THE ORIGINAL MAI TAI
1944**

The rum which motivated the creation of the Mai Tai was a fine, golden, medium-bodied Jamaican from Kingston. Trader Vic added fresh lime juice, flavored and sweetened it with Orange Curacao from Holland and French Orgeat with its subtle flavor of almond.

The drink chilled nicely with a considerable amount of shaved ice so a large 15-ounce glass was selected to compliment the cooling and generous quality of the Mai Tai.

THE ORIGINAL FORMULA

2 ounces 17-year old J. Wray Nephew Jamaican rum
1/2 ounce French Garnier Orgeat
1/2 ounce Holland DeKuyper Orange Curacao
1/4 ounce Trader Vic's Rock Candy Syrup
juice from one fresh lime

Hand shake and garnish with half of the lime shell inside the drink and float a sprig of fresh mint at the edge of the glass.

The success of the Mai Tai and its acceptance soon caused the 17 year old rum to become unavailable, so it was substituted with the same fine rum with 15 years aging which maintained the outstanding quality.

**"OLD WAY" MAI TAI FORMULA
1997**

1 ounce Fine Jamaican Rum (15 or 8 year old)
1 ounce Martinique Rum (St. James)
1/2 ounce Orange Curacao
1/2 ounce Orgeat Syrup
juice from one fresh lime (about 3/4 ounce)

Mix and serve as in the original formula.

**THIS IS THE FORMULA OF THE PRESENT DAY MAI TAI
AT TRADER VIC'S RESTAURANTS
1997**

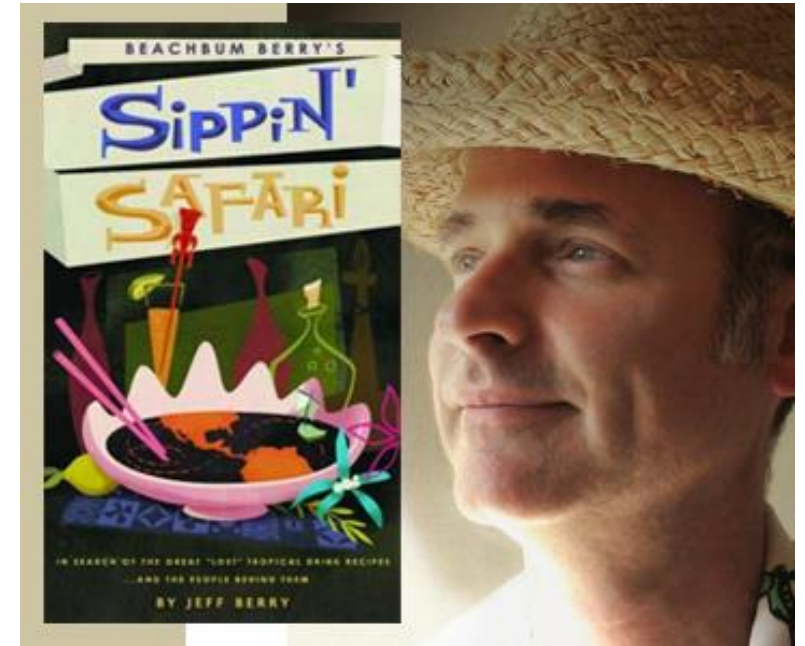
2 ounces Fine Jamaican Rum
4 ounces Trader Vic's Mai Tai Mix
juice of one large lime

Mix and serve as in the original formula

The World Rediscovered the 1944 Mai Tai

The Craft Cocktail Revolution





Mai Tai Ingredients

It isn't just about the rum





Orange Curacao

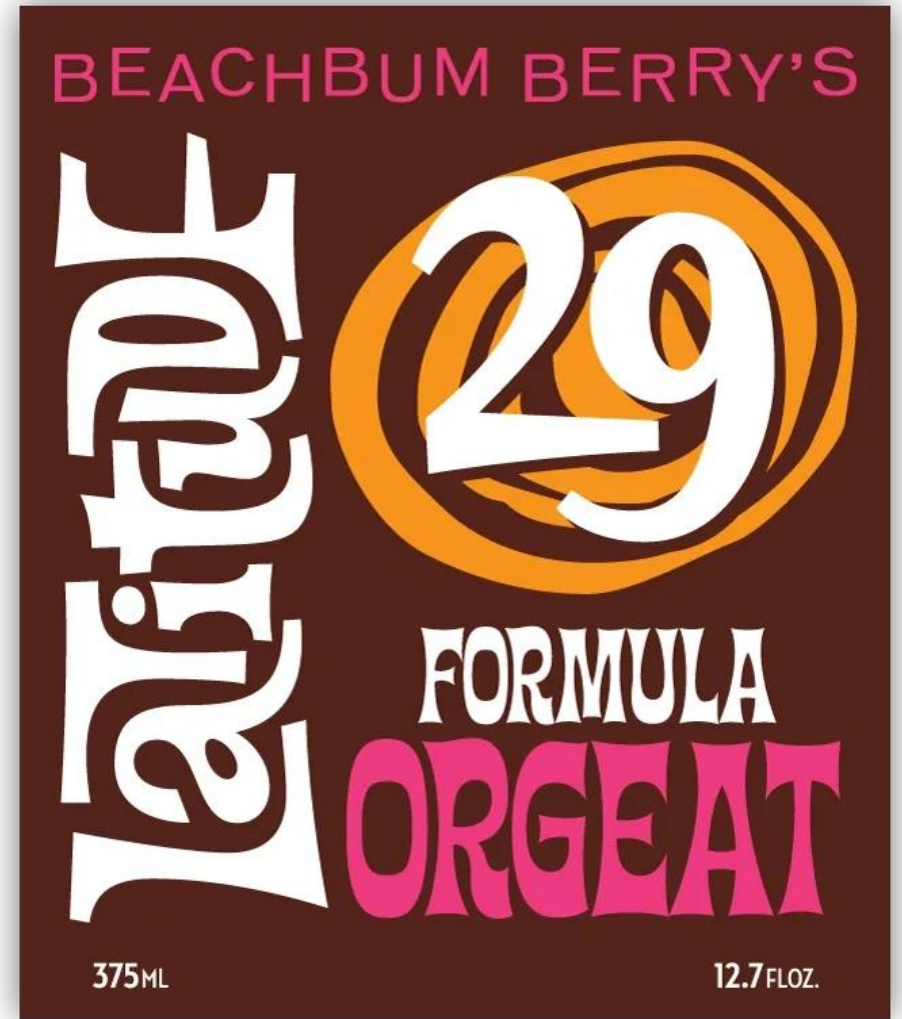
ultimatemaitai.com/about/orange-curacao/

Orgeat ("ore-zha")

Almonds, sugar,
and either rose
water or orange
flower water

Shortcuts: Almond
Milk and Almond
Milk Concentrate

ultimatemaitai.com/about/orgeat/





LIME

“Juice of One Lime”
= 1 oz



Your Own Rum Blend

“What one rum can’t do...”



Long Aged Jamaica Rum
White/Light Puerto Rican Rum
Dark Jamaica Rum
Martinique Rhum Industriel
Aged Martinique Agricole
Multi-Island Rum Blend
Demerara Rum
Virgin Islands Rum
Aged/Black Puerto Rican Rum Blend

**What's the
Rum in a
Trader Vic's
Mai Tai?**

Denizen Merchant's Reserve

Most famous one-bottle Mai Tai rum blend
Developed with Martin Cate to emulate the
2nd Adjusted Formula

Contains aged Jamaican Rum and Rhum
Grand Arôme from Martinique

The Mai Tai rum at Smuggler's Cove and
many other bars



Make and DRINK





The Ultimate Mai Tai Rum Blend

Equal Parts (½ ounce each):

Appleton 12 Rare Casks
Jamaica Rum

Smith & Cross Jamaica Rum

Planteray Xaymaca Special Dry
Jamaican Rum

Planteray O.F.T.D. Rum

Try it at Tiki Tom's in Walnut Creek!

Rums of the Mai Tai: Make it Your Own

Commonly Seen

Aged Jamaican Rum

Dark Jamaican Rum

Light Puerto Rican Rum

Aged Rhum Agricole

Martinique Rhum

Demerara Rum

Blended Rum

Other Rums Used Frequently

Overproof Jamaican Rum

Hawaiian Agricole

Cachaça

Haitian Rum and Clairin

Philippine Rum

ultimatemaitai.com/about/rum/

Mai Tai Variants

The Mai Tai as a Template



Mai Tai Riffs

Bitter Mai Tai - uses Campari

Tia Mia - uses Mezcal

2044 Mai Tai - sub Yellow Chartreuse

Banana Mai Tai - sub Banana Liqueur

Wine Tai - sub White Wine

ultimatemaitai.com/about/recipes/



Blue Mai Tai

1 oz Lime Juice

½ oz Orgeat (Latitude 29)

¼ oz Simple Syrup

½ oz Giffard Curaçao Bleu

½ oz Aged White Rum

1 oz Overproof Jamaica Rum

Shake with crushed ice and
garnish with mint.

“Noteworthy” Mai Tais

You can call them bad, if you wish





APPLEBEE'S \$1 MAI TAI

Rum, Pineapple,
Passionfruit, Orange, Black
Cherry, and Lime

(2019)



Bali Hai Restaurant's World-Famous Mai Tai

3,000,000 Mai Tai's Sold (May 21, 2024)

½ oz Sweet and Sour Mix

¼ oz Orgeat

¼ oz Triple Sec

2½ oz Cruzan Light Rum

2½ oz Coruba Jamaican Rum

Shake with ice



Li-Po Chinese Mai Tai

Chinatown, San Francisco

Dark Rum

Light Rum

151 Rum

Chinese Liqueur (Ng Ka Py)

Pineapple Juice

Anthony Bourdain: "Holy shit these things are fucking lethal!" (2012)

The Cocktail Book (1980)

¾ oz Dark Rum

1½ oz Light Rum

¾ oz Tequila

¾ oz Triple Sec

1½ oz Apricot Brandy

1½ oz Orange Juice

1 dash Orgeat

1 dash Angostura Bitters

2 dashes Grenadine

Blend with ice in a blender. Pour into large goblet or tankard.

Garnish with slices of orange, lime, lemon, pineapple, and a maraschino cherry.

"There are several different versions of the Mai Tai, but this seems to be the most popular with bartenders and patrons alike."



Noteworthy Mai Tais

Actually noteworthy





Top 10 Mai Tais

According to a guy on the internet

Beachbum Berry's Latitude 29

The Copper Room (Yucca Valley, CA)

Dr. Funk

Hale Pele

Inside Passage

Maunakea Mai Tai at Skull & Crown Trading Co.

Smuggler's Cove

San Francisco Mai Tai at Trader Vic's Emeryville

Sunken Harbor Club (Brooklyn)

Undertow

Top 10 Mai Tais of 2025

Devil's Reef

Kona's with Appleton 17

Smuggler's Cove

Dr. Funk

Inside Passage

The Cellar

Make and Drink w/ Appleton 21

Strong Water Anaheim

Occulto 477

The Fink!



Top 10 Mai Tais of 2026 ... so Far

The Fink is number two



RTD Mai Tais

High End
(higher ABV)

Tip Tip Proof

Proof Cocktail
Co.

Small Hand
Cocktails

Kō Hana

Low End
(lower ABV)

Trader Vic's

Koloa

The rest in this
class are terrible



ultimatemaitai.com/about/rtd-mai-tai/



POWDERED MAI TAI MIX



POWDERED MAI TAI MIX



TOMMY
BAHAMA
FROZEN
MAI TAI



Best Mai Tai Ever... for Me

The Kon-Tiki in Oakland

The last Ultimate Mai Tai by Terry Six

Always use "Please" and "Thank you"

Remember to work with your bartender and tip generously

Conclusion



Drink What You Like

There's no right or wrong answer for what you put in your Mai Tai



A TIKI BAR,
HIDDEN INSIDE
ROSETTA ROASTING.

OFFICIAL LAUNCH

MAY 24.

5-11PM

FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

Kevin Crossman,
UltimateMaiTai.com
GUIDING THE EVENING

JOIN US AS HE HOSTS THE NIGHT
AND DIVES INTO EVERYTHING
YOU'VE EVER WANTED TO KNOW
ABOUT THE MAI TAI.

 CURATED MAI TAI FLIGHTS
+ OUR FULL TIKI MENU

IF YOU'RE INTO RUM,
THIS IS WORTH FINDING.

Tikeasy

— DOWNTOWN LIVERMORE —

Tikeasy Launch + Mai Tai Happy Hour

Sunday, May 24
5 – 11 pm

Hidden Tiki Bar inside Rosetta Roasting in
Downtown Livermore

Questions

Slides at UltimateMaiTai.com





The Ultimate Mai Tai Recipe

1 oz Lime Juice

½ oz Orgeat (Latitude 29)

½ oz Orange Curacao (Ferrand or Clement)

¼ oz Demerara Syrup

½ oz Appleton 12 Jamaica Rum

½ oz Smith & Cross Jamaica Rum

½ oz Planteray Xaymaca Jamaica Rum

½ oz Planteray OFTD Rum

Shake with crushed ice

Tiki Tom's Libations

IZOMBIE

In honor of the
SAMBOO BEN.
Served in some states
Park 108, Lemonhart 151,
Lime, grenadine, bitters,
18 PER CUSTOMER 18

RUM

What there are
smooth
blend,
strawberry 15

RELEASE THE KRAKEN

Beauty meets Beast in this gorgeous
cocktail experience
This 45 Oz Grog features a unique rum blend
featuring Black Tot, Clemente Canne Bleue, Plantation
O.F.T.D., Don's mix, apple spice, and Lime juice 75

THE ULTIMATE MAI TAI

By Kevin Crossman

What can we say... Its all in the Name
Kevin's unique blend of four heavy and funky
Jamaican and Guyana rums, fresh lime, Orgeat,
demarara, Orange Curacao 18

SANG OF THE SIDEN



Mai Tai Variants at Trader Vic's

By the early 1970s, Trader Vic's had added several cocktails to the menu that basically were variants of the Mai Tai that replaced the 2 oz of Jamaica-forward Mai Tai Rum with another spirit or ratio.

- Menehune Juice – sub Light Puerto Rican rum. Garnish with Menehune figure.
- Suffering Bastard – sub 3 oz rum (Light, Gold, Dark)
- Pinky Gonzales – sub Tequila
- Honi Honi – sub Bourbon
- Vodka Tai (before 2020: Rusky Tai) – sub Vodka

Trader Vic's Island-Tai Variants

Maui Tai (with Pineapple)

Mango Tai

Guava Tai

Passion Tai

½ oz Lime Juice

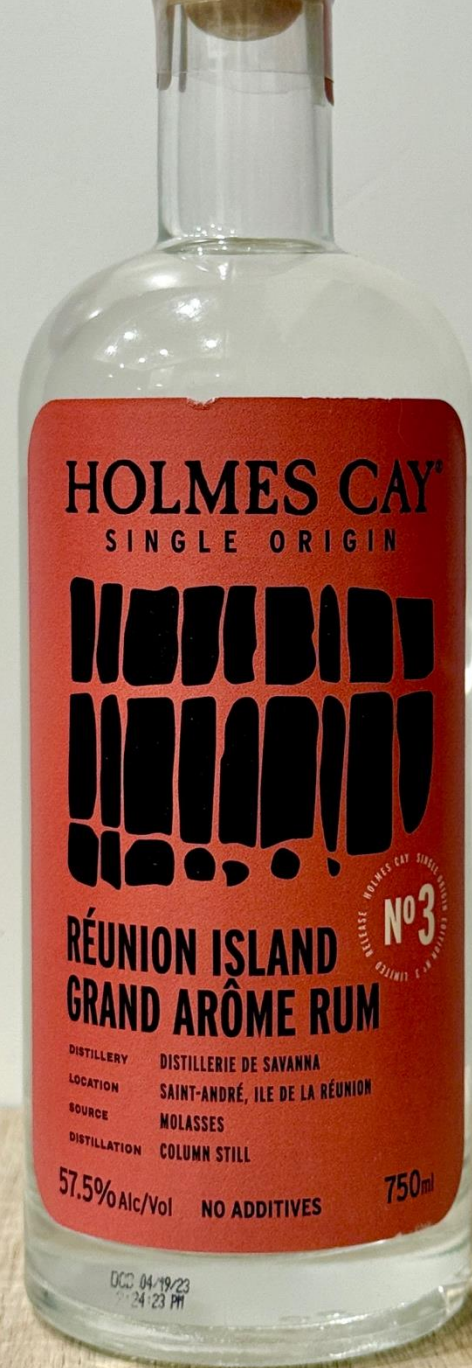
1 oz Pineapple Juice / Mango Puree / Guava Puree / Passionfruit Puree

¾ oz Mai Tai Concentrate

1 oz Trader Vic's Gold Rum

1 oz Trader Vic's Light Rum

Garnish with spent lime shell and mint sprig





APPLETON ESTATE®
CRAFTED AND AGED IN THE
HEART OF JAMAICA

MINIMUM AGED **17** TROPICAL YEARS

SINGLE ESTATE • JAMAICA RUM

LEGEND

A RE-CREATION OF THE LEGENDARY RUM
CRAFTED BY J. WRAY & NEPHEW IN THE 1940'S

One of 1,500 Bottles	DISTILLED 2005	BOTTLED 2022
TOTAL CASKS 10	70 CL	49% VOL

Tommy Spence
MASTER BLENDER

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