



MARKET WATCH

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RUM'S MATURE SIDE: AGED BRAND EXTENSIONS ARE HELPING PREMIUMIZE THE CATEGORY

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August Sebastiani, founder and president of 3 Badge, owner of the aged Dominican rum Kirk and Sweeney, is bullish on the segment's prospects, but notes that there are challenges, particularly in the fledgling classification system. "We expect to see the future of aged rum become more premium as well as more transparent," he says. "With the category being new, global rules and regulations have started to take form, so we expect to see more transparency about the aging and barreling process."

Earlier this year 3 Badge launched the spiced Kirk and Sweeney Burning Mast (\$49 a 740-ml.) in select markets, with plans for a national launch in development as well as a 375-ml. size, for ease of experimentation by mixologists. The company is also currently developing a ready-to-drink, premium cocktail offering that will be released towards the end of summer, a citrus-forward

3 BADGE BEVERAGE CORPORATION

Hemingway Daiquiri made with Kirk and Sweeney Dominican rum, available in a 750-ml. format. These new selections will join the existing Kirk and Sweeney portfolio, which includes Reserva, Gran Reserva, and Gran Reserva Superior. The brand grew 36% last year, up to 22,000 cases, according to Impact Databank.

KIRK AND SWEENEY RUM