

Mount Gay hosts rummeliers from around the globe

The inaugural Rummelier Roundtable dinner featured rums from the oldest commercial rum brand

KMT | November 23, 2021 02:16 PM ET



Mount Gay's top management including Managing Director Raphael Grisoni (r) hosted Greg Hill (c) and his group of visiting rummeliers

Last Friday evening, several rum enthusiasts from across the globe were treated to the finest Barbados has to offer in food, entertainment and spirits.

The rummeliers, as they are known, were hosted by Mount Gay Distilleries at the Mount Gay Visitor Centre in Brandons, St. Michael.

“ The visitors all shared a common love – rum. ”

Loop News caught up with the founder and President of the Royal Rum Society, Greg Hill, who provided some insight into the group's formation and how it all culminated in a trip to the island.

Hill relayed how his small rum club, which originated from the humble beginnings in the basement of his home in Richmond, Virginia, grew into a society with over 100 rummeliers from 28 countries throughout the world.

“We are basically rum enthusiasts from around the world...so eventually it [the club] started growing so much that we started using restaurants... from there we came up with a programme called the Rummelier Programme,” he shared.

The programme is a professional designated one which educates interested persons, such as bartenders and mixologists, on the basics of rum and steers them in the right direction. It now offers mostly virtual training sessions, especially since the onset of COVID-19.

For Hill though, the week-long trip to Barbados was more than just educational, it also represented the fulfilment of one of his #bucketlist wishes, to visit the birthplace of rum.

“One of our goals was always to be able to bring these folks together somewhere. So, [as] the birthplace of rum – this was a no-brainer,” he relayed heartedly.

He added: “We were planning on coming right before COVID-19 hit and everything came to a screeching halt but it did give us time to plan.”

The touring group was limited to 40 individuals, which Hill stated was primarily to retain the intimacy of the entire experience.

Prior to the Mount Gay-hosted dinner and social, the rummeliers toured all four distilleries on the island which included West Indies Rum Distillery, Foursquare, St Nicholas' Abbey and Mount Gay.

The night's event included the best in entertainment, culinary fare and liquid refreshment. Guests were serenaded by talented saxophonist Mylon Clarke, treated to a delectable menu prepared by chef Gregory Austin and served at the bar by Mount Gay's resident mixologist Ryan Adamson.

“Mount Gay has done a fantastic job of welcoming us,” Hill remarked.

With plans of obviously leaving with a good stock of rum on the return to their respective countries, Hill was quick to highlight that the trip had also afforded members of the group the opportunity to experience the rich culture of the island, in addition to celebrating Barbados' influence on the rum world.

“We also wanted to make this a cultural experience because rum is more than a spirit, it's about who you are enjoying it with. It's about where it came from. What makes Barbados rum special? What makes it different. And part of that is the love of rum, the love of the people and culture so we try to weave in as much about the culture here as we could.”

The rummeliers were hosted by members of Mount Gay's management team which included Visitor Centre Operation Manager Anies Jordan and the distillery's Managing Director Raphael Grisoni, and they sampled the distillery's special edition Andean Oak Cask brew which was recently added to its Master Blender's collection.