



PRESS RELEASE 2019.11.08

EXCITING NEW RUM PRODUCTS LAUNCH IN CUBA: BLACK TEARS AND LA PROGRESIVA

Zerus Signed New International Joint Venture on 7 November

With Subsidiary of Oslo-Based Rum Specialist The Island Rum Company AS

On 7 November, Zerus, the holding entity for Cuba's national sugar corporation, and Island Rum Brands S.L., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Cuban rum specialists, The Island Rum Company AS, have signed a historic joint venture agreement.

The new company, Ron Vigia S.A. , Cuba's first fully integrated rum production venture since Havana Club International, will bring Black Tears by Vigia and La Progresiva 13 by Vigia to Cuba when they launch early next year.



Black Tears dry spiced, named from Miguel Matamoros' 1928 classic song *Lagrimas Negras*, is the first Cuban brand to enter the spiced category, the fastest-growing segment of rum around the world. Loved by the likes of dancer Lia Rodríguez and Wilson Hernandez, founder of Havana's most popular bar and restaurant "El del Frente" and O'Reilly's 304. Black Tears' unique flavour pays tribute to Cuba's culture and cuisine, pairing the dry profile of Cuban rum with coffee, cacao, and aji dulce. It's dry spiced profile is making waves around the globe. Global rum guru Ian Burrell describes it as "beautiful... a really great rum", while New York City's King Cocktail, Dale DeGroff, says simply "amazing".

Launched in October to the delight of global bartenders, La Progresiva 13 by Vigia is a luxury sipping rum with a dry, mellow character and notes of ripe citrus, sugar cane honey, and oak spice. A blend of some of the island's finest aged rum stocks from the Vigia stable of luxury rum, it is tailored to the progressive crafts spirits drinker.

Ron VIGIA



As part of the 50-50 joint venture, which includes very significant maturing stocks of local rum, Ron Vigia S.A. will establish its own distribution team in Cuba to ensure discerning drinkers across the nation can savour these precious spirits; Says Enrique Arías, co-founder of The Island Rum Company and president of Ron Vigia S.A., “As an entrepreneur of Cuban heritage, it’s great to bring these special and unique rums, which have been appreciated by Cuban men and women, to their home market and deepen our working relationship with consumers in Cuba and around the world.”

A black ink handwritten signature, appearing to be 'AR', with a long, sweeping underline.

Adèle Robberstad,
CEO The Island Rum Company
(adele@itscuban.com)

For more information, or to arrange an interview, please contact: Adèle Robberstad at adele@itscuban.com

About The Island Rum Company AS

Inspired by a love for Cuba and its spirits, The Island Rum Company works to preserve the island’s culture, nature and traditions, while bringing its liquid treasures to a wider audience. Headquartered in Oslo, it was founded in 2012 by Tore Villard and Hans Christian Holst, Chairman and CEO of Norwegian wine importers Arctic Beverage Co., and Enrique Arías, a Spanish entrepreneur of Cuban descent based in Havana, who is now president of Ron Vigia SA. The management team includes executive chairman Andrew Morgan, who managed the acquisitions of spirits businesses around the globe during a 27-year career with Diageo, and CEO Adèle Robberstad, who launched the heritage Cherry Heering brand into over 150 markets and sold it to De Kuyper Royal Distillers.

Ron VIGIA



CUBA'S FINEST RUM



THE *Island Rum*
COMPANY