

Brazilian Premium Cachaça Gets Some Heavy Reinforcement in the US

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Karate champion, best-selling author, pirate enthusiast, and motivational speaker, former Philadelphia 76ers owner Pat Croce now adds cachaça authority to his list of achievements with his recent US\$ 1 million investment in Leblon, a white cachaça rum made from Brazilian sugar cane.

Croce, now a partner in Leblon, LLC, will also serve on its board of directors. He is no novice when it comes to evaluating rum and fine cane spirits like Leblon.

His Rum Barrel bar and restaurant, opened this year in Key West, Florida, is the perfect complement to his adjacent Pirate Soul Museum, which contains nearly 500 authentic buccaneer artifacts.

The Rum Barrel evokes the golden age of pirates, right down to the impressive selection of over 100 super-premium rums and cane spirits.

But only with Leblon, does Croce, successful businessman and spirits savant, put his money where his palate is. "I prefer Leblon for the fresh taste of sugar cane that comes through. "Yet, it's incredibly smooth, perfect in my favorite cocktail, the caipirinha," says Croce.

Leblon is distilled in Brazil in labor-intensive Alambique copper stills, then shipped to France for aging in Cognac barrels to soften the spirit while preserving the fresh cane taste.

Nine months after its debut in the US, Leblon is already available in 20 states, priced around \$30 per 750 ml bottle. Leblon Caipirinhas are the rage in popular establishments such as Kittichai in New York, Nikki Beach in Miami, and Asia de Cuba in Los Angeles.