



THE ELITE BARTENDER

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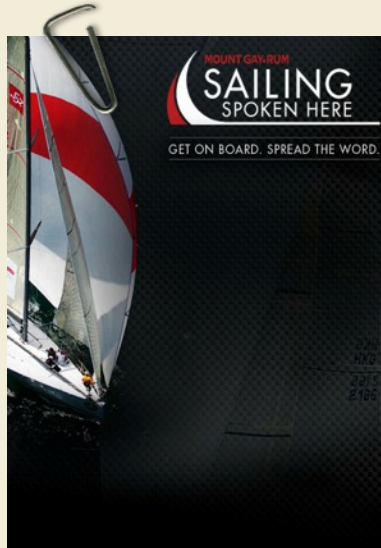
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Mount Gay Rum Launches website sailingspokenhere.com

Yo-Ho-Ho and a Bottle of ...You Know

By STUART ELLIOTT

Given how fiercely wintry winter has been in much of the country, the idea of sailing away someplace sounds pretty inviting. That makes for serendipitous timing for a new campaign for a leading brand of premium-priced rum. The rum is Mount Gay, founded in Barbados in 1703 and now sold by the Mount Gay Distilleries division of Rémy Cointreau. Mount Gay is celebrating sailing in a campaign that is centered on a microsite, or special Web site, and also has a presence on Facebook and mobile applications. The campaign carries the theme “Sailing spoken here,” which doubles as the Web address for the microsite. The goal is for the microsite to serve as an online community for sailors — a virtual port, if you will.



The content of the special Web site includes a rundown of races and other events; a feature called Crew Finder, which declares: “Find a crew. Join a crew. Get sailing”; a Cruising Life section, where stories and photographs can be shared; a section where races, calls and protests can be replayed and reargued; and even a Bar Finder, for locating post-sail libations.

The microsite is lightly branded, in keeping with a belief that over commercializing an online destination will only discourage computer users from visiting. One section specific to Mount Gay is devoted to the red caps sporting the brand’s logo — the words “Mount Gay” superimposed over a map of the island of Barbados — that are given away to sailors who have completed races sponsored by the rum.

Indeed, the inspiration for the special Web site, which is separate from the brand’s regular Web site, is the longtime ties between sailing and Mount Gay. The distillery likes to say they date to the brand’s early years, when sailors would bring home a cask of rum to prove they had been to Barbados. The intended audience for the campaign are those who “are so passionate about sailing that they organize their lives around it,” says Daniel Cabaleiro, international brand director for Mount Gay at Rémy Cointreau, who is based in New York. For them, “the boat is like the next room after the living room,” he adds.



The campaign has a budget estimated at more than \$1 million. It is being created by OgilvyOne Worldwide, part of the Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide unit of WPP. The campaign has only a small presence in traditional media, consisting of advertisements in sailing magazines that are meant to drive traffic to sailingspokenhere.com. That makes the campaign emblematic of a growing number of efforts from mainstream marketers that are concentrated in digital media — and, in some instances, 100 percent online, without any presence in print, television or other so-called legacy media.

For instance, in recent weeks marketers as varied as the Tostitos brand of snack chips and the Flo line of paper sold by Sappi have introduced campaigns that are only online. And DonQ, a Puerto Rican rum, announced last week a contest that consumers can enter on social media Web sites. “Thanks to the new digital tools, we could continue the conversation with our loyal fan base out of the water,” Mr. Cabaleiro says.

Mount Gay Rum contd. . .

The Mount Gay microsite quietly went live at the end of November, he adds, in what is known as a soft launch, and visitors are encouraged to log in with Facebook through a Facebook fan page.

Previous ads for Mount Gay, which included television commercials, had been created by Publicis Worldwide, part of the Publicis Groupe, Mr. Cabaleiro says, adding that talks with OgilvyOne started more than a year ago. “We were looking for a strong partner in the digital space,” he says, “who could provide us with good advice and help us develop the tools.” Not only are digital media “much more targeted,” Mr. Cabaleiro says, which can help Mount Gay reach consumers more effectively, they are also more cost efficient. “Given the levels of investment for the big monsters,” he adds, referring to the rum giants like Bacardi and Captain Morgan, “the cost of entry” to start running big campaigns for Mount Gay is “almost impossible.”

Rémy Cointreau spent \$55,900 to advertise Mount Gay in major media last year, according to the Kantar Media unit of WPP, compared with no measured spending in 2009, \$99,500 in 2008 and \$194,100 in 2007.

Mount Gay, which in the United States costs slightly below \$20 to about \$100 a 750-milliliter bottle, Mr. Cabaleiro says, depending on the variety, competes against similarly priced rum brands like Appleton, from Jamaica; El Dorado, from Guyana; and Gosling’s, from Bermuda. Rémy Cointreau “believes this category will become premium,” he adds, as have liquor categories like Scotch whisky, tequila and vodka, “and we already see signs of that.”

The reason is that “rum can be a very elegant and complex spirit,” Mr. Cabaleiro says, “not just a base for a busy cocktail.” Although Mount Gay is “skewed toward more affluent people than the average rum,” he adds, the campaign is not “targeting only those people who earn \$100,000 a year.” After all, it may cost a lot to own and operate a yacht but it does not cost much to be part of a crew.

Four years ago, Rémy Cointreau decided that the “potential of Mount Gay” meant there ought to be more attention devoted to the brand, Mr. Cabaleiro says, and changes were made that included new packaging and additional varieties. “The brand has an amazing DNA,” he adds, “but it was not being conveyed.” That led to a theme, “The rum that invented rum,” which continues to be used in venues like mountgay.com and retail point-of-sale ads created by Madden Communications in Wood Dale, Ill.

The concept of reaching out to the sailing community represents a way of marketing Mount Gay by telling consumers “we want them to be excited about the brand, a brand that supports a way of life you’re choosing,” says Joel Tretin, group creative director at OgilvyOne in New York.

“There used to be a time you had a 9-to-5 job, you came home, plopped yourself on the couch and watched television,” he adds, but now, when “we’re all working as hard as we can to make ends meet, time is so short.” That results in “people focusing on their passions, what they really want to do and spend time on,” Mr. Tretin says, like sailing, which is pursued by “a broad group of people who love the camaraderie, love being out in the water.”

“Mount Gay has a legitimate place in the sailing community,” he adds, citing its history, sponsorships and promotions, which gives the brand “a legitimate standing” to market itself to sailors through social media. If an initiative like the “Sailing spoken here” campaign is “false, if it doesn’t ring true, people will not respond to it,” Mr. Tretin says.

Thus, the ties between Mount Gay and sailing aficionados make the campaign “a wonderful thing to work on,” he adds.

Liquor Fun Facts

Did you know that the human body generates its own supply of alcohol naturally on a constant basis, 24 hours a day, seven days a week?

We are sure you would be zapped to know that the world's oldest known recipe is for beer!

Would you believe that Vikings used the skulls of their enemies as drinking vessels! Doesn't that sound spooky!

In Missouri, anyone below the age of 21 who takes out domestic trash enclosing even a single empty alcohol beverage container can be charged with illegal possession of alcohol. Now that is so unfair right?

This is strange – Did you know that the early Church stated that alcohol was an intrinsically a “good gift” of God to be consumed and relished. While persons might prefer not to drink, to scorn alcohol was heresy. So enjoy God's gift to the fullest!

You would be surprised to know that while there wasn't any cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, or pumpkin pie to eat at the first Thanksgiving, still there was beer, brandy, gin, and wine to drink! So are you now wondering – How far is Thanksgiving?!

Did you know During Prohibition; restraint activists hired a scholar to redraft the Bible by eliminating all references to alcohol beverage! Now that must be too much of a work!

The alcohol in drinks of either low alcohol content (below 15%) or high alcohol content (over 30%) tend to be absorbed into the body more slowly. Thus we suggest - What rushes in quicker makes the deepest cut. So, take it easy...!

Mount Gay Rum Cocktails

Milanese Sailor

- * 1 1/2oz Mount Gay Extra Old rum
- * 3/4oz Ramazzotti Amaro
- * 1/4oz falernum
- * 1/4oz creme de cacao

Fill the spyglass nearest by with ice and donate the above ingredients. Shake. Do not hold up to your eye, but instead strain into a chilled wooden mug hand.

Rikki Tiki Tavi

- * 3oz Mount Gay Extra Old rum
- * 3/4oz cognac
- * 3/4oz grapefruit juice
- * 3/4oz lime juice
- * 1/2oz orgeat
- * 1/4oz simple syrup

Flash blend all ingredients with 1c crushed ice.

