

SCHOTMAN BARREL SELECTION FOURSQUARE 17 YEARS:

Brand: Schotman

Label: Barrel Selection

Distillery: Foursquare

Country: Barbados

Distilled: 2005

Bottled: 2022

Age: 17 Years

Alcohol: 58.4% Cask strength

Cask: 11 years Bourbon barrel in Barbados, shipped to Europe, 2nd Bourbon barrel till bottling

Details: No additives, and no chill filtering. This is a single barrel, with 278 bottles filled. This is the second bottling from the Barrel Selection range that Schotman does. Released August 2022.



TASTING:

Looks:

The lovely darker yellow colour fits the age, and shows that the barrel wasn't burnt. There is no caramel added, which is a positive element for us.

Nose:

This one has quite an intense nose, plenty wood and decent fruit notes. There is a bit of vanilla on the nose, but it all gets a bit more gentle with time. The light sweetness from the wood stays though. It makes the nose more complex. There are notes of caramelized apple and some cinnamon apple at the same time. Apple pie crosses our minds, but then 2 varieties: one with, and one without cinnamon clearly.

The alcohol is noticeable but hey, it is a cask-strength rum, so what did you expect? It's strangely not super-duper sharp at all, the alcohol just keeps the drink alive. The wood is very strong in the aftertaste, this is a very well-aged one.

Through time, this rum is experienced drier on the tongue. This rum develops while you sip it. Go slow, and a lot can appear in your glass.

Taste:

The taste has lovely oak notes for sure. Add to that some coconut notes, and the main character is clear. It needs a bit of time, but then the freshness of it all appears as well. Some pure chocolate notes as well, a lovely combination. It is like drinking a kind of Bounty bar. The coconut is coming from the bourbon barrel, a thing that often appears. But here a second barrel is used, so the entire flavour is much stronger. Nothing is added to this rum, this is all natural elements.

After some air, some sweet almonds appear, the concentrated almond essence that is added to cakes and pies while baking. We don't bake ourselves, but we both watched our grandmas while they were making it. Ones added, the kitchen had this lovely sweet smell like apple-pie. This time it is more the outer part of the cake, the crispy part.

For its 58%, this is a very good shippable rum, just go slow and gentle on it. It's quite high, but it doesn't come to you like that. In a blind tasting, there are not many that will complain about its strength. After 10 minutes trying it again, it feels much drier on the tongue, but the alcohol is still not aggressive. The vanilla gets accompanied by some pepper element, a truly difficult combination to achieve. It's very unique because the pepper of course it very direct and dry on its own but the vanilla is gentle with some sweet notes. So, you notice some sweet elements, while it isn't really there. The sweetness is also given a bit by the thickness of the rum, the brain does strange things with that. It starts to get dry on the tongue, but then the black pepper comes back.

When swirling in the glass, the wood comes back as well. We thought the rum had some kind of bottle-shock, but this move helps a lot with bringing it all out to be smelled. The flavour starts to shout at you, with much more power in its flavour than it started. Give it time, and it only gets better. This is a very divers rum for sure. Strange it didn't get a medal at the GRF in Berlin.

Finish:

In the aftertaste, the coconut lingers nicely, together with bits of tutti fruity. The finishing flavours invite us to finish the entire sample that was send, so we start all over again with the last bit. We immediately start adding some air into it while swirling, and in the second try everything last much longer and stronger. This rum needs attention, but it is worth it. When the bottle arrives late September, we will do this tasting over and over again. It is really fun to notice the development happening inside your glass. Also, some of those fresh apple notes echo in the flavours, this is a superb rum.

Overall:

This one doesn't need to be diluted, unless you are more of a shooter than a sipper. This is a rum to relax with, for speed drinking you should take some simple stuff. It is wise to drink this one slow, although it's not an aggressive drink. This one is really nice.

Even though it isn't a sweet rum, it feels like a kind of a liquid dessert. You can treat it like a nice digestive, like often was done in the old days with a cigar next to it. You go to the fireplace or whatever, have a drink and a smoke while you tell impossible stories. Yeah, this one is nice and balanced.

Verdict:

We are not Foursquare specialists, but neither are we novice with this brand. From what we have tasted (and that is still quite a few), this would be the best that ever ended up in our glasses. This is truly a great rum, and I prefer it undiluted. Plenty idiots want to add water the moment they get poured, but that is the most stupid thing you can ever do. First you need to taste it pure, only then you can dilute it. Only then at least, you know what the water does to your drink. If you start diluting immediately without tasting first, you have no clue what the water actually did in your glass. You don't know the original drink, so you are oblivious about the effect of the adding. You only know it did something, but you don't know what. You need to know the basis first, then you know where it goes to. Alas, I don't like water or ice in my pure rum. If Richard Seale wanted the rum to be diluted, he could have put the water in himself, and make money with that added water.

We tasted 5 rums that evening, and this is by far my favourite.

This is just our personal opinion of course, everybody's free to have his/her own.