Distilled rum originates from sugar cane plantations in the Caribbean. It was a useful way of disposing of molasses, a by-product of refining sugar cane. There is not a single standard for rum, with different countries having different regulations for the spirit, but it can be loosely split into dark, gold, light, and spiced rums.

**Esters**

- **Ethyl propionate & Ethyl acetate**: caramel-like, fruity aroma; pear drop-like aroma.
- Esters are important contributors to the aroma of rum, and are responsible for fruity notes. Ethyl acetate is typically the most abundant, though a large number of other esters are also present.

**Other compounds**

- **Vanillin & Guaiacol**: sweet, vanilla-like aroma; smoky aroma.
- A number of compounds originate from the barrels that the rum is aged in. These include phenolic compounds, and also oak lactones. These are found in lower quantities than in whiskey, as rum is not aged in barrels for as long.

**Acids & Alcohols**

- **Acetic acid & 2-ethyl-3-methyl butyric acid**: Acids in rum are important for production of esters, but also contribute to flavour. Acetic acid is the main volatile acid in rum, whereas 2-ethyl-3-methyl butyric acid is characteristic of rums.
- **Phenethyl alcohol & isoamyl alcohol**: floral aroma; malty aroma.

**Dark vs. White rum**

- **β-Damascenone**: apple-like, floral aroma.
- To remove any colouration, white rums are generally filtered through charcoal. As well as removing any colour-causing compounds, this also removes some aroma and flavour molecules.
- β-Damascenone is a potent odorant in dark rum due to its low odour threshold. However, it is much less apparent in white rum, due to loss during filtration.