



Today, the whole world is on the same page and that silver line very much visible now towards the progression of the new normal and wine and spirits industry is not untouched. The best part is the symptoms are progressive and positive. Slowly yet steadily we are recovering from the unexpected pandemic. Many new trends surfaced and we are more prone to accept the new changes. Not very prominently yet premiumization happened and people are more sure about the drinks they are consuming. WSCI - Wine & Spirits Club of India reached a new heights of 17500+ virtual members and this month our cover story is about Ashanti Spiced Red, a very familiar name specially in India and Africa. Top of it the milestone of Indian mixology and the first ever lady pioneer mixologist Shatbi Basu, shared her favourite cocktail with this Spiced red. As a new initiative to create a platform to enhance the horizon of alcohol we covered a budding entrepreneur Ayushi Malhotra and her experiment with The Royal Rhino African creme liquor naming Arabica Crème Tiramisu.

## From the Editor's Desk

**They call me Alistair. I was born in Africa, not far from the Côte d'Or. My life is a succession of trips and adventures on all continents.**

Curiously enough, my life as a nomad took its origin from a hibiscus flower (the Sabdariffa hibiscus). It watered my childhood and has been with me ever since. She is the link between all my points of departure and arrival. Following the random paths I've taken, from meetings to reunions, I've tasted improvisation and spontaneity, giving back a place to senses and emotions I thought had disappeared. I'm the product of this crossbreeding. The man who brings me here today to tell you my story.



When the sun was at its zenith and Africa saw me growing, we would gladly find refuge in a hut nearby to quench our thirst with a hibiscus flower juice that we rightly enjoyed. Its scarlet color and unique taste are the fruit of a tradition that has marked the lives of entire generations in the four corners of Africa. Housed somewhere in a part of my memory, this flower had virtually disappeared. It was only later, long after leaving the African continent, it reappeared again, somewhat by accident. I travelled the Caribbean and South America in search of good rums, visiting distilleries, and ageing cellars. At each stage of my journey, I was offered the same hibiscus flower juice but each time presented under a different name.

Intrigued, I decided to pay particular attention to it. Wherever my paths brought me, history kept repeating itself. From the Middle East to Minor Asia, from Eastern Europe to Asia, I found the hibiscus flower as part of a new culture. That is how my hibiscus flower route was born. It became obvious to me to combine the hibiscus flower from Africa, the ginger from India, and a famous rum from Guatemala grown in the foothills of the Andes. The culmination of this quest is a spicy rum whose coppery color is an invitation to taste. Balanced, silky, and opulent, notes of roasted honey intermingle with hints of vanilla. The hibiscus flower brings freshness and mentholated notes. Meanwhile, the ginger gives character to the blend and a spicy finish with citric accents... That is how Ashanti was born.

With Alistair and in close collaboration with our partner NATIONAL FOOD AND BEVERAGE, we are pleased to announce the launch of ASHANTI SPICED RED in INDIA. It is for three reasons that Ashanti finds its place there. First, both India and the ginger from which it originates are part of Ashanti's DNA. Second, the hibiscus flower is present and consumed there under the name Malaika phool (जमाइका फूल). Finally, the name Ashanti, although of African origin, has a particular resonance in Indian culture. It celebrates the ambivalence of life through two words: Shanti and Ashanti, from which a certain balance may well have been born with the arrival of ASHANTI SPICED RED.

## Shatbi Basu

In certain ways I'm old fashioned. I respect tradition, history and culture though I am not ruled by them. They do, however, show a path that we can choose to build on or walk away from. Let's look at the well-trodden way of the Old Fashioned cocktail. It began as the Whiskey Cocktail in early 19th century America, then the Old Fashioned Whiskey Cocktail, to being simply the Old Fashioned. Just Whiskey, likely Rye to begin with and moving to Bourbon, sugar - either a sugar cube or sugar syrup, bitters, cold water and/or ice. Stirred in the glass with ice or in a mixing glass. Served straight up or on ice. In spite of a brief period when muddled fruit made an entry to the recipe, it has remained largely untouched from its original avatar.

But evolve it did. From being put on the back benches in the mid-20th century it has risen strongly again with little twists that add to its character, showing remarkable persistence and strength in its foundation. Fat washed and infused whiskey, interesting sweeteners, an array of aromatic bitters and sometimes an entirely new spirit base too!

It has taught me courage of conviction and the spirit of evolution and adapting to the current. Including the pandemic we have been faced with these last 6 months. That even in the face of disruption and disquiet we can rise again. Changed maybe but resilient and in sync with today. I love the Old Fashioned that I twist in myriad ways yet always allowing it to shine. My newest one is my connection with Africa, where I was born. And this special new spiced rum Ashanti. Guatemalan aged rums infused with the Jamaica flower (a hibiscus variant grown in the Ashanti region of Ghana) also known as rosella, and ginger. Ashanti in India means disquiet but in swahili it says thank you - from the original Asante.

We shall return stronger from this chaos. Thankful we have survived and moved past it. Keep the faith.

## The Ashanti Old Fashioned

Glass: Old fashioned

### Ingredients:

60ml Ashanti spiced rum  
10ml date syrup  
Angostura orange bitters

Garnish: Orange zest, candied ginger

### Method:

- \* Pour date syrup in glass or mixing glass
- \* Add in Ashanti rum and mix well
- \* Fill glass or mixing glass with ice and stir to cool and dilute
- \* Top up the ice and stir again
- \* If using the mixing glass strain over an ice sphere or large cube in an old fashioned glass
- \* Twist the zest on top and drizzle in the bitters
- \* Give it a quick stir and garnish



## Arabica Crème Tiramisu with The ROYAL RHINO, African Cream Liqueur.



**Ayushi Malhotra**, a marketer of smile and happiness. She started baking at home as a hobby and realized that what made her extremely happy was the smile on the face of family and friends after trying her new experimented recipes. That's when she realized that whisks and nozzles fascinated her much more than bands and gavel. So she went forward and did an advanced diploma in Pastry arts from Academy of Pastry Arts, India and never looked back.

After working in the commercial environment of the industry for some time, she ended up with Zoella, her independent space for living and loving every bit of her passion.