

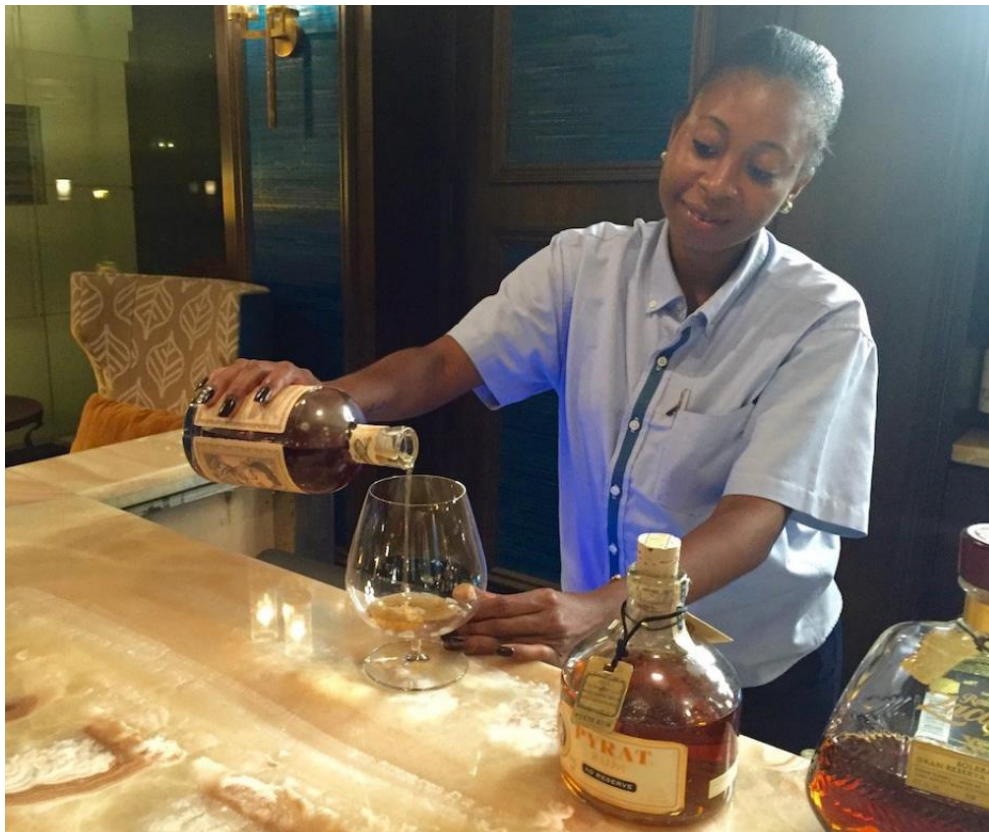
## The Rummelier of Anguilla



Zemi Beach's rum master

By Sarah Greaves-Gabbadon  
*CJ Travel Editor*

There's no liquor more synonymous with the Caribbean than rum, so to visit without tasting the tropical tippie would be impolite. And while we absolutely encourage enthusiastic quaffing of plastic cups of rum punch, we heartily encourage getting to know the subtleties and more sophisticated incarnations of the amber nectar by attending a rum tasting.



At Zemi Beach House Resort & Spa in Anguilla, Rushelle Oliver is the rummelier, or, as the hotel calls it, “rhummelier,” helping guests (and walk-ins) gain an appreciation of the potent potable at the hotel’s Rhum Room, where 100 rums from all over the world await your sipping pleasure. The Guyanese guide comes by her expertise honestly; she’s been drinking rum, she tells us, since she was 10-years-old! “My grandfather enjoyed his liquor and would give me a little sip, even as a child,” she says. “Now I just love rum!” she says. “I love to drink it, and I love to mix it. Rum is my passion.”



Oliver, who's worked at Zemi since it opened last February, shares that passion every evening, suggesting and serving shots and flights of both small-batch and big-brand rums to curious tippers. Below, she shares her top rum-drinking tips and recommendations with CJ readers.



### **What kind of person usually comes to the Rhum Room?**

Most of my Rhum Room guests are men, and they're usually vodka drinkers who are curious and want to try something new.

### **Which rums do you recommend most?**

I always recommend guests start by tasting two rums. My favorites are El Dorado 21-year-old from Guyana, which is really sweet; it's the gateway rum. Guatemala's Zacapa XO goes down really smooth; there's no hangover. For something stiffer, I also like Trinidad's Angostura rums numbers 1 and 1919, which are stronger.

### **Any tips for newbie rum drinkers?**

Fine rums – the rums we serve here – are all best enjoyed neat. No ice; no mixer; just on their own in a snifter glass so that you can really appreciate the aroma and the flavor every time you sip.

### **What's your most popular rum?**

Hands down it's Don Papa from the Philippines. It has a strong vanilla scent that you can smell the moment you open the bottle, and a sweetness that's easy on the palate. Jamaica's Appleton Estate Rare Blend 12 year-old and 21-year-old rums are popular, too.

### **And the most expensive rum?**

We sell Appleton 50 year-old [of which only 800 bottles were produced] for \$650 a shot. The first guest to taste it was an American, who ordered two shots back-to-back and really enjoyed them! But oak-aged Don Papa is just \$15 a shot, and it's much more popular, so it's not always about price.

### **What do you think about Anguilla's Pyrat Rum?**

It's a good rum but not designed for sipping straight; I suggest it mixed with Ting, ginger ale or another mixer. Many people don't know that although it used to be bottled in Anguilla, it's actually made from Guyanese Demerara and other Caribbean rums.

### **And what do you pour for yourself?**

It's usually Barceló from the Dominican Republic. I discovered their rums while hanging out in the Spanish bars on the island. But I also love Hennessy.