

CLAIRIN

The Spirit of Haiti

Faubert Casimir



www.thespiritofhaiti.com

WHAT IS CLAIRIN TRADITIONNEL?

Clairin Traditionnel represents an unwavering commitment to ancestral production methods and the dedicated producers who uphold them.



This standard begins in the fields with the cultivation of non-hybridized, heirloom sugarcane varieties grown through chemical-free agriculture and sustainable organic farming practices that eschew synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. The transformation from juice to spirit relies exclusively on spontaneous fermentation via wild, ambient yeasts without any industrial intervention. Finally, the process is completed through traditional distillation, utilizing batch stills and centuries-old techniques to ensure the liquid remains a pure reflection of its heritage.

Barradères

A SHORT HISTORY

HISTORY

Barradères, often referred to as Le Grenier d'Haïti (the breadbasket of Haiti), is a historic commune in the Nippes department with a legacy rooted in both its isolation and its agricultural fertility. Tucked into a deep valley at the base of the peninsula, the town was historically a center for coffee and cocoa production. Following the Haitian Revolution, while much of the country moved toward subsistence farming, the valley's unique geography—accessible primarily by boat or rugged mountain tracks—helped preserve 18th-century artisanal practices that vanished elsewhere.



LAND

The topography of Barradères is defined by its dramatic and protective isolation, nestled within a deep, verdant valley. The community is situated in a synclinal depression - a low-lying basin carved between two towering limestone mountain ranges that run parallel to the coast. This unique cradle geography creates a micro-environment where the surrounding peaks act as a natural barrier, shielding the valley from the harshest Caribbean winds while trapping the humidity necessary for lush, tropical growth.

At the heart of the topography is the Barradères River, which snakes through the valley floor, depositing mineral-rich alluvial silt that has made the region one of the most fertile agricultural zones in the country. The elevation transitions sharply from the rugged, rocky slopes of the massifs down to the marshy, sea-level plains of the Bay of Baradères. This transition from high-altitude limestone to river-fed lowlands creates a diverse range of soil compositions—varying from red clay to dark, organic loam.



Barradères

THE TERROIR



SOIL

The soil composition of Barradères is a complex, high-mineral matrix shaped by millions of years of limestone erosion and the persistent alluvial activity of the Barradères River. As a synclinal valley, the region acts as a natural basin for alkaline-rich limestone sediments washing down from the surrounding massifs, which blend with deep deposits of ferruginous red clay and dark, organic-rich loam on the valley floor.

This alluvial-calcareous mix is exceptionally fertile and well-draining, characterized by a high concentration of calcium carbonate and iron oxides, which contributes a distinct savory or umami mineral backbone to the sugarcane grown there. Because the river frequently floods the lower plains, the soil is constantly replenished with fresh silt and decomposed tropical vegetation, creating a nutrient-dense environment that fosters the high-ester development and complex aromatic precursors found in the local Hawaii cane variety.

ELEVATION

The elevation of Barradères is defined by a dramatic and rapid transition from sea-level coastal plains to high-altitude mountain ridges, creating a walled-in effect for the valley floor. The town itself and the primary agricultural lands, including the sugarcane fields for Clairin Casimir, sit at a low elevation of approximately 10 to 50 meters above sea level. However, this low-lying basin is immediately flanked by the rugged limestone massifs, which surge upward to elevations exceeding 600 to 800 meters within just a few kilometers of the riverbanks.

This extreme altitudinal gradient acts as a thermal regulator; as warm, moist Caribbean air rises against the steep mountain walls, it cools and condenses, triggering frequent localized rainfall and misty mornings. This trapped humidity, combined with the low-elevation heat of the valley floor, creates a greenhouse-like environment that accelerates the maturation of the Hawaii cane and provides the ideal ambient temperature for the spontaneous, wild-yeast fermentations that define the region's spirit.



Barradères

BON CLAIRIN BEGINS IN THE FIELDS



CANE FIELDS

Casimir's agricultural practices are a testament to traditional, non-industrialized farming that has remained unchanged for generations in the Barradères valley. The sugarcane is grown in polyculture and entirely without the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides; instead, the fields rely on the natural fertility provided by the river's alluvial deposits and the manual clearing of brush. Harvesting is an intensive, artisanal process where the Hawaii cane is cut by hand with machetes only when it reaches full maturity. Because the rugged topography prevents the use of heavy machinery, the stalks are often transported from the steep, terraced plots to the distillery by donkeys or small boats along the river. This pre-industrial approach ensures that the cane remains undamaged and pristine, preserving the delicate wild yeasts living on the stalks that are essential for the spontaneous fermentation that follows.



CANNE HAWAII ROUGE & BLANC

Clairin Casimir is defined by the cultivation of Hawaii Rouge and Hawaii Blanc, two heirloom cane varieties that are increasingly rare in the Caribbean - but flourish in the secluded, fertile valley of Barradères. Hawaii Rouge is distinguished by its dark, purplish stalks and high sugar content, contributing deep, syrupy base notes and a heavy mouthfeel to the distillate, while Hawaii Blanc offers a brighter, more vegetal profile that provides essential lift and aromatic complexity.

When harvested at peak ripeness and fermented together, these canes produce a juice exceptionally rich in precursors for ester development. This genetic diversity, combined with the traditional practice of adding local botanicals like ginger and lemongrass during fermentation, results in the trademark gastronomic profile of Casimir—a spirit that balances the wild, sweet intensity of the Hawaii canes with an unmistakable savory, umami-driven core.

The Farmer Distiller

FAUBERT CASIMIR



The production of Clairin in Barradères is, for the Casimir family, a sacred lineage that spans over seven decades of craft artistry. The foundation of this legacy was laid by Faubert's father, Duncan Casimir, who established the family's presence in the valley and refined the style of fermentation that remains their signature today. Under Duncan's tutelage, Faubert became the steward of the land, perfecting the art of distilling the temperamental Hawaii cane varieties and cementing the distillery as a vital pillar of the Barradères community.

When Faubert took over the operation in 1979, he did so as a guardian of his father's specific techniques—most notably the precise addition of ginger, lemongrass, and sour orange and lime to the fermenting juice.

The Farmer Distiller

FAUBERT CASIMIR



RAW MATERIAL

Faubert Casimir's approach to producing the highest quality cane juice begins with a deep commitment to non-interventionist, organic polyculture within the fertile Barradères valley. By growing his Hawaii Rouge and Hawaii Blanc canes alongside other tropical crops without the use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides, he ensures a nutrient-dense raw material that is rich in the complex minerals of the alluvial soil. The timing of the harvest is critical; the cane is only cut at peak ripeness to maximize brix levels, ensuring the juice has the necessary sugar concentration for a robust fermentation. Because the stalks are harvested manually and transported by donkey to avoid the bruising caused by industrial machinery, the juice remains pristine and vibrant, retaining the full integrity of the wild yeasts and aromatic precursors that define the spirit's signature umami and fruit-forward profile.

THE RATOON METHOD

In the rugged terrain of Barradères, Faubert Casimir eschews mechanical harvesters in favor of the machete, a tool that allows for a level of selectivity and precision impossible for industrial machinery. Each stalk of Hawaii cane is individually assessed and hand-cut at the very base, where the concentration of sugar and minerals is highest. This manual method is not merely a matter of tradition but a vital quality control measure; by using a machete, the harvesters ensure that only the ripe, healthy stalks are taken, leaving the field's ecosystem intact for subsequent harvest seasons. Furthermore, the clean, sharp cut of the machete prevents the crushing or shredding of the cane fibers that often occurs with mechanical harvesters. This preserves the internal integrity of the stalk during transport by donkey, preventing premature oxidation and keeping the juice sealed and pristine until it reaches the mill. This meticulous, labor-intensive process is what keeps the raw material alive and vibrant, providing the clean, high-energy fuel required for a successful spontaneous fermentation.



From Field to Spirit

THE GROWING SEASON



JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

Year Round

PLANTING AND RATTOONING

Cane is planted year-round in a polyculture system alongside mango and banana trees. This provides natural shade and preserves the soil's moisture and nitrogen levels. Because the cane is hand-cut (rather than ripped out by machines), the rootstalk remains in the ground. This allows the distillery to harvest from the same plants for 6 to 8 seasons before needing to replant.

Months 1-4

EARLY GROWTH

The canes establish their root systems. Intercropping with banana and mango trees provides the young stalks with necessary shade and moisture retention.

Months 5-10

GRAND GROWTH

High rainfall and humidity trigger rapid stalk elongation. The cane can reach heights of 10+ feet. No synthetic fertilizers are used; the soil relies on natural biodiversity.

Months 11-14

MATURITY & RIPENING

Rainfall decreases, signaling the plant to stop growing vertically and start storing sucrose (sugar) in the stalks. This is the critical ripening window.

January to June

PRIMARY HARVEST

Hand-harvesting begins. Workers use machetes to cut only the most mature stalks. The dry weather makes the mountainous terrain of Barradères passable for mules and oxen. Cane is transported by animal power and pressed immediately to prevent juice spoilage. The bagasse (cane fiber) is spread out to dry in the sun.

From Field to Spirit

FERMENTATION

PROCESS

The fermentation at the Casimir distillery in Barradères is a rare surviving example of a transitional Caribbean style, where the raw energy of wild-yeast fermentation is refined by a distinct, family-held botanical tradition. Once the Hawaii Rouge and Hawaii Blanc canes are pressed, the fresh juice is moved into open-top wooden vats where it undergoes a spontaneous fermentation that typically lasts around ten days. Casimir is able to extend the fermentation by lowering the pH of his wash by squeezing in the juice of sour oranges and small limes called citron vert. This extended duration is key to the spirit's heavy ester profile, allowing the ambient yeasts of the valley to fully transform the sugars into a complex array of aromatic compounds.



From Field to Spirit

FERMENTATION (CONT.)



Along with the natural acidifiers like citron vert and sour orange, Casimir uses a traditional, botanical approach to control unwanted bacteria and pests.

In Barradères, lemongrass is grown alongside the sugarcane to keep away unwanted pests. Casimir adds bundles of fresh lemongrass directly into the open-air wooden fermentation vats.

Lemongrass contains high levels of citral and geraniol, which act as mild, natural bactericides. This prevents "bad" bacteria (like acetobacter) from turning the precious sugarcane juice into vinegar before it can become alcohol.

Yeast Protection:

While it deters spoilage bacteria, it does not harm the wild, ambient yeasts. This allows the fermentation to remain spontaneous and vigorous.

Flavor Profile:

Beyond protection, it imparts the signature high-toned, herbal, and citrus notes that make Casimir's Clairin distinct. Ginger is often macerated or crushed and added to the juice at the start of the fermentation cycle.

Antifungal & Antimicrobial:

Gingerol, the active component in ginger, serves as a natural pesticide against invasive molds that might thrive in the humid Haitian heat. It ensures that only the desired wild yeast strains dominate the wash.

Acidity Regulation:

Ginger helps stabilize the pH levels of the fermenting juice. A stable pH is the best natural defense against stuck fermentations or off-flavors.

Complexity:

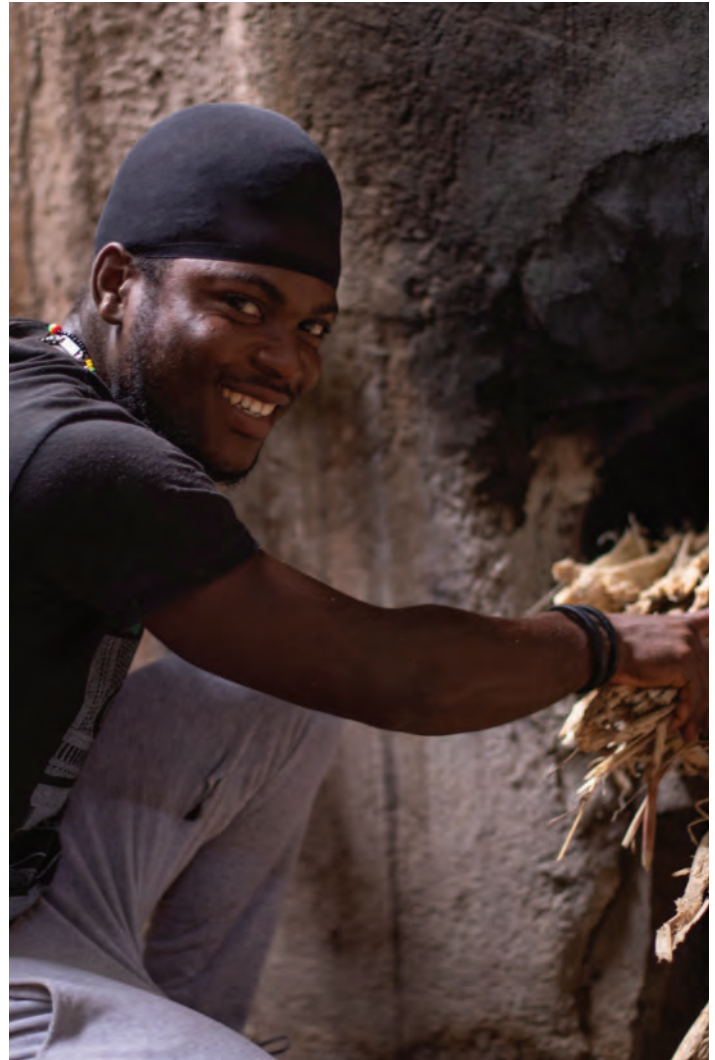
It adds a subtle heat and spicy backbone to the spirit, which balances the intense tropical fruit sweetness of the Hawaii Rouge cane.

From Field to Spirit

DISTILLATION



From Field to Spirit **DISTILLATION** (CONT.)



PROCESS

At the Casimir distillery, the distillation process is an intense management of high-heat, direct-fire copper pot stills—a method that requires a constant, intuitive presence rather than automated controls. Once the botanical-infused fermentation is complete, the wash is loaded into the chauffe vin, a wooden vat that uses the heat from the current distillation to pre-heat the wash for the next batch. When ready, the preheated wash is transferred to a small, traditional copper pot still. Casimir's still sits directly over an open fire fueled by dried sugarcane stalks (bagasse) and local wood.

This direct-fire method is volatile and demanding; the distiller must carefully monitor the intensity of the flames to prevent the sugars in the heavy, high-ester wash from scorching. This intense heat creates a Maillard reaction within the pot, caramelizing the organic compounds and yielding the deep, savory, and almost meaty umami notes that define the Casimir profile.

The spirit is collected in a single distillation, coming off the still at a high proof between 48% and 52% abv that perfectly preserves the intense aromatics of the raw material.

SUSTAINABILITY

Faubert Casimir's distillery in Barradères operates with a raw, circular efficiency that feels more like a lived philosophy than a modern corporate initiative. Everything starts with the Hawaii Blanche and Hawaii Rouge sugarcane, which is grown entirely without synthetic chemicals or pesticides. Instead of clearing the land, Casimir practices intercropping, allowing the cane to grow alongside mango and banana trees to preserve the soil's biodiversity. During the harvest, workers cut only the ripe stalks by hand, ensuring the roots remain intact for future seasons and the field stays green.



The fermentation is spontaneous, fueled by the wild, ambient yeasts found on the cane itself, and the only "additives" are local ginger, lemongrass, or citrus used to naturally manage the acidity. Perhaps the most elegant part of the cycle is the distillation: the small copper pot stills are fired by burning bagasse—the dried, fibrous remains of the squeezed sugarcane. This creates a closed-loop energy system where the waste from the first step of production becomes the fuel for the last, leaving a footprint that is as light as the spirit is bold.





CLAIRIN

The Spirit of Haiti

The Spirit of Haiti is a dedicated collective focused on preserving the ancestral production of Clairin, the traditional agricultural spirit that has defined Haitian village life for centuries. By partnering with small-scale master distillers, the company celebrates the savoir-faire of the producers and their commitment to organic farming of heirloom cane, spontaneous wild-yeast fermentation, and artisanal distillation. This initiative serves as a vital bridge between Haiti's rural agricultural heritage and the global stage, ensuring that each bottle remains an unadulterated, still-strength expression of the island's diverse micro-terroirs and sovereign craftsmanship.

CLAIRIN CASIMIR

Producer Name:	Faubert Casimir
Village:	Barradères
Raw material:	Sugarcane juice
Cane type:	Hawaii Rouge & Blanc
Fermentation:	Natural with ambient yeast
Distillation:	Pot still
Bottling Strength:	49.21% abv

Clairin Casimir is a unique agricultural spirit produced by Faubert Casimir in the lush valley of Barradères, where his family has operated their distillery since 1979. This expression is crafted from organic Hawaii sugarcane, which is harvested at peak ripeness and pressed to extract a nutrient-rich juice.

The hallmark of Casimir's production is a spontaneous fermentation uniquely enhanced by the addition of local botanicals, such as lemongrass and ginger, which intensifies the spirit's ester profile and act as natural pest deterrent. Distilled in a traditional direct-fire pot still and bottled at its natural strength, the resulting spirit is world-renowned for its savory complexity, offering deep, concentrated notes of sun-dried tomatoes, pickled herbs, and spicy tropical fruit that exemplify the wild, untamed terroir of the region.

TASTING NOTES

Nose: An intense and wildly unique bouquet that leans heavily into the savory spectrum. It opens with concentrated aromas of sun-dried tomatoes, balsamic glaze, and pickled herbs. As it opens, sweeter layers of overripe mango and wild honey emerge, punctuated by a spicy, aromatic lift from the ginger and lemongrass used during fermentation.

Palate: The mouthfeel is dense and oily, delivering an immediate punch of umami and spice. Flavors of roasted red peppers and black olives are balanced by a sharp, gingery heat. Mid-palate, it transitions into a rich, vegetal sweetness reminiscent of cooked agave and tropical fruit preserves, maintaining a high-ester "funk" throughout.

Finish: The finish is long, warm, and remarkably complex. It leaves a lingering trail of dried spices, white pepper, and a subtle earthiness that resembles damp forest floor. A final, bright note of citrus peel provides a clean exit to an otherwise heavy and savory experience.



WATCH DISTILLERY TOUR

CLAIRIN

The Spirit of Haiti



Haiti's spirit landscape is defined by its deep-rooted artisanal heritage, featuring more than 500 small-scale distilleries—known locally as guildives—scattered throughout the countryside. Traditionally, these producers have crafted Clairin (or Kleren) primarily for the enjoyment of their own local villages, resulting in an extraordinary diversity of styles across the island.

Established in 2012, The Spirit of Haiti was founded to celebrate grower-producers of Clairin Traditionnel and support a route to global market.



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