GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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VI Callwood Rum Distillery wins Award at Conference in Grenada

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The Government of the Virgin Islands has recognised the achievements and enduring heritage of the Callwood Rum Distillery following its success at the 2026 Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA) Conference and Exhibition rum competition in Grenada.

The distillery's Panty *Dropper* rum was awarded Best Tasting Rum at the conference. The award was formally presented to the Callwood family by Junior Minister for Culture the Honourable Luce Hodge-Smith during a handover ceremony also attended by Managing Director of Seven Seas Water Corporation, Ms Noni M. Georges.

Honourable Hodge-Smith commended the Callwoods' for maintaining a centuries-old tradition and passing their knowledge and craft from one generation to the next.

, "We are incredibly proud of the Callwood family for preserving this important part of our Virgin Islands heritage for more than 200 years," Honourable Hodge-Smith said. She added, "The distillery represents the strength of our traditions, the value of passing our cultural knowledge from one generation to the next, and the unique experiences that make our Territory special."

The Junior Minister added, "The distillery's success on the regional stage demonstrates that our traditional products have a place in the wider Caribbean, and we look forward to seeing this legacy continue for generations to come. The Callwood Rum Distillery remains an important part of our heritage and tourism product, and we congratulate the family on this well-deserved recognition."

The recognition celebrates the distillery's continued contribution to the Virgin Islands' cultural heritage and its longstanding tradition of rum production, which spans more than 200 years.

Ms Georges explained that the CWWA Conference is an annual regional gathering of water and wastewater professionals, bringing together technical experts, policymakers and senior public officials from across the Caribbean. Alongside its professional programme, the conference features cultural activities, including competitions in rum, water and pepper tasting.

Ms Georges recounted the enthusiasm surrounding the distillery's participation in the regional competition, noting that the recognition offers an opportunity to share the Virgin Islands' rum-making heritage with a wider Caribbean audience. She also described the positive feedback received about the rum during the 2026 conference.

Recognising the Virgin Islands' rich rum-making history and the continued operation of the historic Callwood Rum Distillery in Cane Garden Bay, Ms Georges has used the competition as an opportunity to showcase locally produced rum and represent the Territory on a regional stage.

Speaking on behalf of the family, Mr Michael Callwood expressed appreciation for the recognition, noting that the distillery represents a family legacy passed down through generations.

"It is our family history, our legacy that goes on from generation to generation," Mr Callwood shared, emphasising the family's commitment to keeping the tradition alive.

He explained that the distillery remains committed to its established production methods, believing that preserving its traditional approach is central to maintaining the distinctive taste and character of its rum. He also highlighted the importance of ageing, noting that *Panty Dropper* takes approximately six years to mature, allowing the spirit to develop a smoother and mellower character.

The distillery secured recognition in 2024 and again in 2026, following a period in which it was unable to participate in 2025 due to material being damaged in transit. The latest award further highlights the quality and distinctive character of the family's traditional rum-making methods.

The Callwood Rum Distillery, located in Cane Garden Bay on Tortola, stands as a living example of the Virgin Islands' cultural and industrial heritage. Its continued operation reflects the resilience of a family enterprise that has preserved traditional rum-making practices for more than two centuries.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sustainable Development congratulates the Callwood family on this achievement and recognises its continued role in

preserving the Territory’s heritage, strengthening its cultural identity and contributing to the Virgin Islands’ tourism offering.

Gallery







