



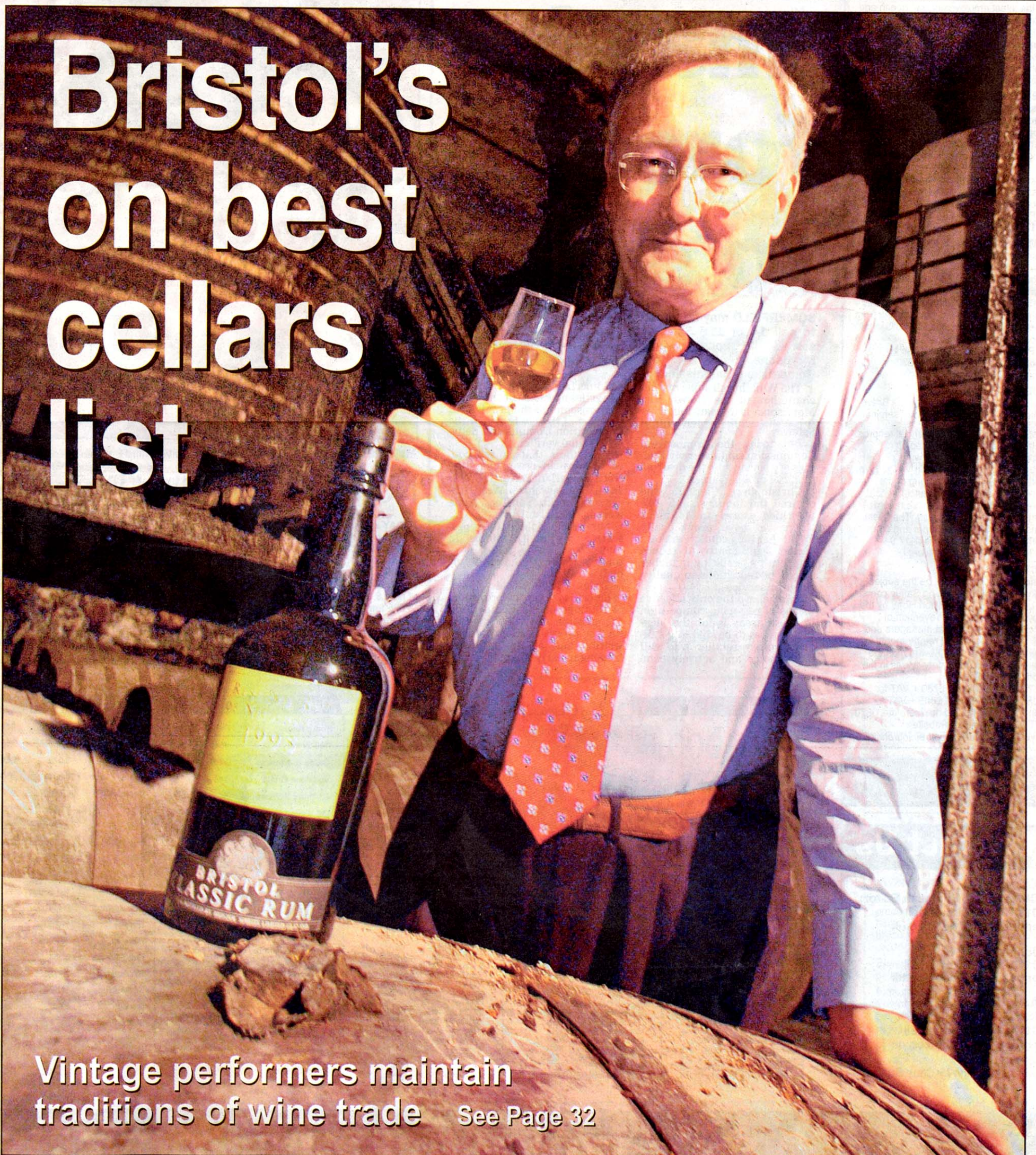
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# Business Post

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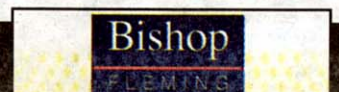
Tuesday, July 26, 2005

## Bristol's on best cellars list



Vintage performers maintain traditions of wine trade See Page 32

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**Cask task master:** John Barrett's firm imports unblended distilled rum from the Caribbean

JOHN Barrett founded Bristol Spirits in 1993 after spotting a "niche within a niche" in the fine spirits market.

Formerly the Bristol Brandy Company, Bristol Spirits imports the finest cognac and rum for an exclusive list of clients and retailers.

The company employs the "early landed method", importing casks of cognac and maturing them in its bitterly cold cellars at Wickwar near Chipping Sodbury.

Mr Barrett, a master of the process, explains: "The climate here gives our cognac a more delicate flavour, evaporating more slowly than that matured in France.

"We are warehouse-keepers or caretakers, monitoring and looking after the casks for anything from 15 to 20 years before bottling."

The subterranean warehouses are also the origin of a range of 15 fine rums.

Bristol Spirits has built up a network of contacts with stills across the Caribbean, importing unblended distilled rum, matured using a variation of the same early landed process and marketed as Bristol Classic Rum.

Mr Barrett says: "A bottle will set you back anything from £20 to £120 in Harrods for a good 1974 30-year vintage but I can assure you every penny will be worth it."

Bristol Spirits also sells overseas to the German,

## John's clients are full of good spirits

### Case study: Bristol Spirits

Japanese and Italian buyers, with plans to expand into the Scandinavian market and to re-enter the US market.

Mr Barrett says: "The industry has been through some relatively hard times as a whole but we have largely escaped the worst of it.

"But there are challenges ahead.

"Encouraging sales and promoting sensible drinking seems to come up quite regularly, while EU legislation and increasing regulation may also impact on the industry."