

Bartales

Best of

N. 37 | APRIL 2022

SUPPLEMENT OF BARTALES



HOT SPIRIT / RON COLÓN
COLUMBUS' RUM



LIQUID STORY / CATALAN APERITIF
THE RUTA DEL VERMUT



REPORT / NATIONAL SPIRIT
GRAPPA TO LOVE



HOT SPIRIT / DELAMAIN
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HISTORY'S TIME

There are stories that are nurtured by time, where time raises the stakes and challenges eternity, like the story of cognac, for example. There is no other great spirit where time is as essential as for the French liqueur. Some are aged for a very long time, even longer than 60 years. Sipping cognac then is like tasting a history book, which just as a Matryoshka doll reveals one story after the other. Suffice to say that the decree which identified spirits from the Charente region as being only from white grape varieties dates back to 1936. And that it was the Dutch who, trading French wine up the Charente River, taught the farmers of the area to distil those wines that would not survive the long trip to Europe. A liqueur caught between history and legend and that for some is even “heaven for the senses”. How can we not then mention Delamain, that small company that for centuries has been producing the exceptional quality of the king of brandies? A family that from one generation to the next has been religiously nurturing a single mission: to protect the artisanal spirit that has always been at the heart of the most iconic cognac producers. Preservers of time who elevate the best of a legend that feeds off its own myth. While waiting that the *part des anges*, that amount of spirit lost to evaporation during aging, reaches higher heavens.

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BarTales
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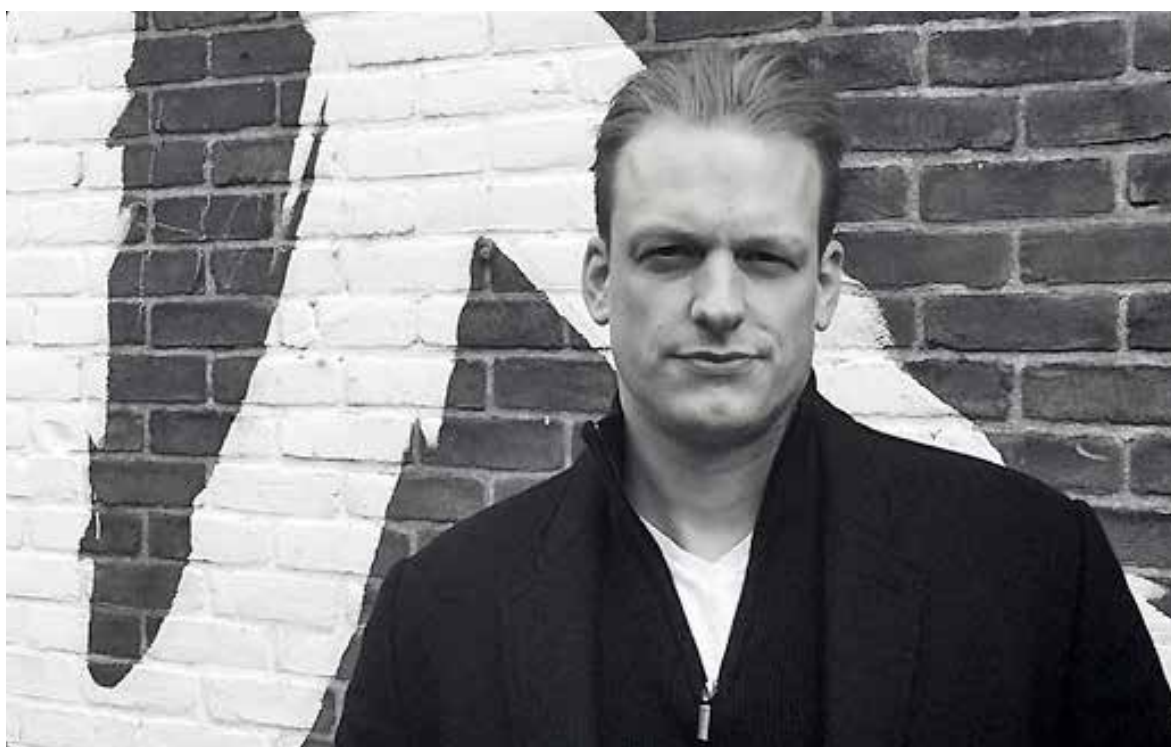
COLUMBUS' RUM

Salvadorian, delicate and fruity
A complex blend
and a coffee variant

BY ALESSANDRO PALANCA

The story of Ron Colón is that of two friends and colleagues, Thurman Wise and Pepijn Jansen, spirit industry professionals for over 20 years. Always travelling around the world in the search of new spirits, in 2018 they embarked a journey that took them to 22 Latin American countries. Among these, one in particular caught their attention.

El Salvador is the smallest country in Central America. Its political history was afflicted by a long civil war between 1980 and 1992. The move towards democracy followed, leading to the establishment of the Republic of El Salvador. The country is neighbour to Honduras and Guatemala, and the southwest lies on the Pacific Ocean. These environmental conditions significantly influence its terroir. It is a





country with beautiful scenery, lush vegetation and 23 majestic volcanoes which make the soil nutrient rich. It produces among the world's best cotton, coffee and sugar cane.

The name El Salvador (The Saviour) refers to Spanish *conquistador*, Pedro de Alvarado. The capital, San Salvador, was founded by his brother, Diego. In 1892, the government under President Carlos Ezeta decided that the local currency should be called "colòn", in honour

of Christopher Columbus it seems. The colòn lasted until 2001, when it was replaced by the US dollar.

The idea of having their own brand of rum was on the minds of the two friends and this became a reality in El Salvador, where the required natural ingredients could be found.

Salvadorian rum is distinguished by its delicate and fruity style, with a light and dry finish. In the Ron Colòn blend are spirits with different styles, distilled

PLACES
THE BEACH
AND
VOLCANOES OF
EL SALVADOR.
ABOVE, SUGAR
CANE
PLANTATIONS.



with column and pot stills that compete to create a very complex spirit. The blend is optimised with Jamaican rum giving it aroma, earthiness, and warmth.

The blend is made from Salvadorian rum from the Licorera Cihuatán distillery, which is column distilled and aged for six years. This distillery is part of the Ingenio La Cabaña Group of El Salvador, one of the oldest local sugar producers. It has been running since 1920 and is the only rum distillery in the country. Operating since 2004, the first Licorera Cihuatán rum was released in 2015.



The sugar cane is processed by a centuries-old mill and the extracted molasses is fermented for 36 hours before being distilled. A small part of Jamaican rums distilled in pot stills is added, not aged and produced by the Hampden, Monymusk and Worthy Park distilleries, as well as a three-year matured pot still rum from Worthy Park.

The casks used for ageing are ex-bourbon, the angel's share is calculated at 8% per annum and the master distiller and blender is Gabriela Ayala.

A very interesting variant is the coffee-infused Ron Colón. This uses Bourbon coffee beans from the El Ciprés region.

Coffee production was introduced to



El Salvador from neighbouring Guatemala in 1790 but sales only started in the second half of the 1800s. The first plantations were set up in the western region

PRODUCTION
AT THE TOP,
MASTER
DISTILLER AND
BLENDER
GABRIELA
AYALA.



PRODUCERS

ANDRES AND
TOMAS
TRIGUEROS OF
JAGS HEAD
COFFEE.

of Ahuachapán. Already in the 1920s, it accounted for 90% of the country's exports.

Coffee from El Salvador is typically very acidic, full of body, with sweet aromas of honey and hints of citrus. This coffee grows at 1,700 meters above sea level, its soft and sweet beans are dried naturally, stirred manually for about four weeks to ensure the dry out evenly. It is medium roasted and infusion in Ron Colón lasts 48 hours during which the coffee releases all its aromas. The rum is not filtered to maintain the essential oils released by the coffee.

The coffees used are produced by Andres and Tomas Trigueros of Jags Head Coffee, producers of coffee for four

generations on farms in the Apaneca-Iamatepec mountain range region.

But the most curious Ron Colón variant is probably Ron Colón RumRye, a hybrid spirit of 50% Ron Colón Dark 6yo and 50% of a 4yo 100% straight rye whiskey distilled in 2017. Felicity Gransden, director of Flavour Innovation at Ron Colón, said it was important to create a new style of spirits that would combine rum and whiskey together.

The refined 50% blend allows the characteristics of both spirits to emerge, preventing them from clashing. The choice of rye whiskey has historical reasons linked to the tradition of the US spirit industry and techniques, a very spicy whiskey with a slight hint of mint.



Vermouth & Spirits

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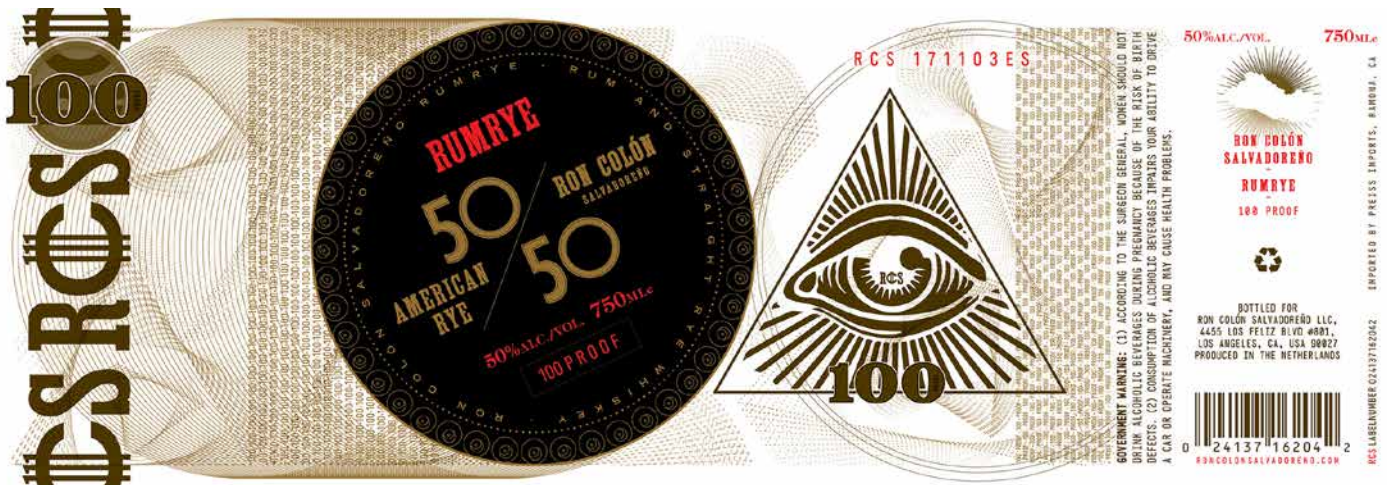
EL SALVADOR
HARVESTING
AND DRYING
THE COFFEE.



Hybrid spirits are nothing new, however RumRye aims to break purists' scepticism towards this category. Pepijn Jansen says: "We want to create a post-modern approach to spirits, turn the persistent cataloguing of spirits on its head. Our idea is to bring together

expressions that work together, contrary to conformed ideas which tend to look at combining some spirits negatively. We want to create new drink experiences."

If we relate this concept to mixing, we must remember that many historical cocktail recipes combine rum and rye.



This history was further inspiration for creating Colón RumRye.

The packaging of Ron Colón's bottles is a tribute to the ancient colòn currency. The banknote is reproduced on the label, with a coin that can be removed

and stored in the top of the cap. With a focus on sustainability, the glass used in Ron Colón's bottles is recycled.

Ron Colón has won multiple awards at the biggest world spirits competitions.

Alessandro Palanca



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RON COLÓN HIGH PROOF RUM – 111 proof – 55.5%

On the nose, the aromas of tropical fruit, fresh banana and pineapple are more perceptible, to which is added a rich and deep bouquet of raisins and plums. This is followed by milk chocolate, roasted almonds, and hints of dried apricot. The palate confirms the balance found on the nose. It has the same hints of tropical fruit but with an evolving warm and spicy roasted caramel flavour.



RON COLÓN COFFEE FLAVORED – 111 proof – 55.5%

El Salvador has a long and rich history of coffee production, hence the idea of creating a rum that would feature it. Something different, subtle, dry, fruity but which brings out the flavour of coffee. Roasted almonds and woody spices are accompanied by ripe fruit and vanilla which bring a sweeter note followed by the coffee aromas. The coffee infusion gives the palate tones of dark chocolate, plum and hazelnut. A rum with a rich and warm taste ending with a delicately bitter note. Banana and pineapple also return.



RON COLÓN COFFEE FLAVORED – 81 proof – 40.5%

Warm notes of coffee, cocoa beans, spices and nuts. Freshness and sweetness of honey and vanilla. On the palate we have coffee and milk chocolate, ripe tropical fruit.



RON COLÓN RUMRYE – 100 proof – 50%

Nose: Tropical fruit, fresh mint, warm honey and hints of spices. On the palate, notes of candied fruit and orange blossom followed by spices stand out. The rye is distinct, balancing the natural sweetness of the rum. The finish is dry with hints of citrus and mint.

Shaking perspectives



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GAMONDI
1890

THE RUTA DEL VERMUT

In Reus, which also has the only museum dedicated to the aromatised wine

BY VITTORIO BRAMBILLA

In the interior of Catalonia, just over 10 kilometres from Tarragona, is Reus, a city off the beaten track of mass tourism. The capital, Barcelona, is known for the works of Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí, the greatest exponent of Modernism, the most famous of his works being the Sagrada Família, Parc Güell and the Casa Batlló. The more learned experts know that Reus, the birth city of Gaudí, is also known to be the cradle of Modernism.

Reus is a city of small streets full of tiny old shops, large squares animated by stores and a relaxing atmosphere.

In its bars, “vermut” is enjoyed as an aperitif, together with olives, tapas and fried chips, and purists drink it without ice, orange or lemon. Gaudí never worked in Reus, where, however, there is a museum dedicated to him. But the Gaudí museum is not the only one in the city. In fact, in Reus there is also the “Museu del Vermut”.

At the start of the 20th century, a cultural evolution took place in Europe, whose currents were often associated with drinks. If absinthe, which also appears in some of their works, was associated with the Impressionists Monet,





**ANTONI
GAUDI**

PARC GÜELL,
SAGRADA
FAMILIA AND
CASA BATLLÓ,
WORKS OF THE
FAMOUS
CATALAN
ARCHITECT.

Degas and Van Gogh, Modernism can be tied to vermut, as it is written in Spanish. The famous aromatised wine also had its own ritual in Spain, the “Hora del Vermut” (the vermouth hour), which we have already covered in BarTales and that was very popular in Reus. “Tomar un Vermut” or “Fer un Vermut” is still today the phrase that indicates the “Hora del Vermut”, that time when friends meet for an aperitif together with the typical tapas.

Between the 19th and 20th century there were more than 30 vermut producers on the area of Reus, making the city one of the world’s vermut capitals. When vermut lost popularity, many companies stopped production. Today some of these brands are still in business or have been resurrected. Their cellars, designed by architect César Martinell Brunet, one of Gaudi’s students, are a perfect marriage of wine and architecture.



MUSEU DEL VERMUT

ABOVE, THE FIRST BOTTLE OF THE COLLECTION.



These works of architecture, sort of wine cathedrals guarding the territory, are found throughout the Priorat region. Built with simple materials from the area, these buildings have a common style made of brick columns that rise to form arches, and vaults that support a simple roof of beams and tiles. They all vary from each other and are all worth the visit,

together with a tasting.

Usually, Spanish vermouths differ from the Italian and French ones due to a greater use of botanicals – some recipes have even used more than one hundred.

In 1982 Joan Tàpias, a Catalan businessman with a passion for vermouth, began a unique collection of vermouth bottles, insignia and memorabilia relating to a multitude of brands. This collection, which began when his father, Pablo, gave him a bottle of Cinzano, now counts about six thousand pieces.

After running out of space at home, he decided that his collection deserved a more devoted spot. Thus the Museu del Vermut was born, which so far is the only exhibition in the world dedicated to the famous aromatised wine. There was no suitable location, but an ideal place was identified in a 1918 modernist building that housed a hostel. It was the work of the Reus architect, Pere Caselles Tarrats.

“El Museu del Vermut” was inaugurated in Reus in September 2014 at 74

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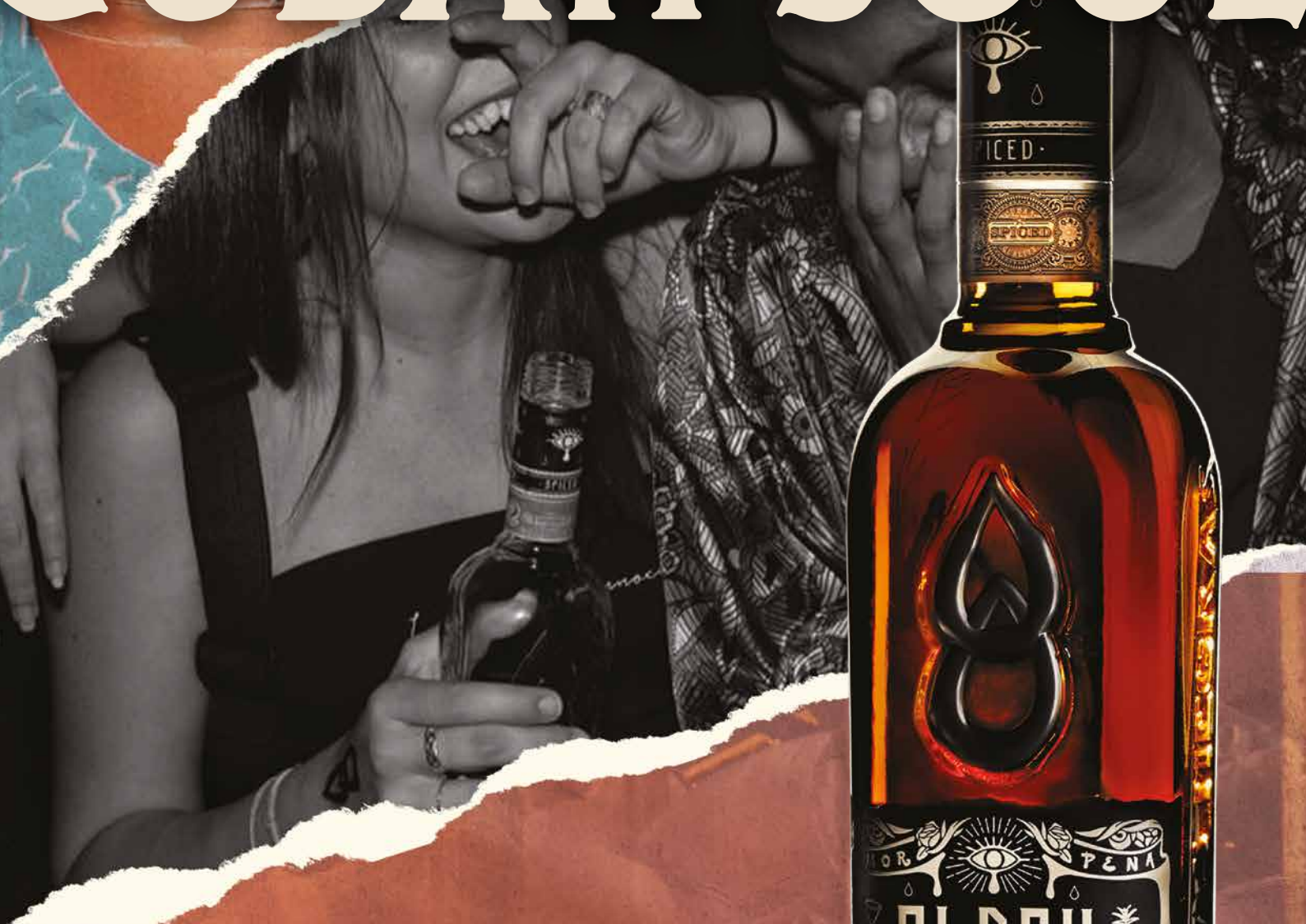
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Calle Vallroquetes, not far from Plaça de Catalunya. The building is divided into rooms, with spaces dedicated to the individual vermouth brands. The three most famous brands from Reus are found there – Miró, Yzaguirre and Iris de Muller – and, of course, a space has also been created for Martini, a brand that contributed greatly to the local popularity of vermouth in Spain.

Today the collection boasts more than 1,600 historical bottles, 300 vintage advertising posters, historical documents and thousands of other pieces from the history of vermouth.

“El Museu del Vermut” is unique in the world, and more than 2,000 brands represent 56 different countries, including Israel, Egypt, Costa Rica and Japan. But such a museum without a tasting area would not do. As a result, a Mediterranean cuisine restaurant was opened inside, whose dishes are also combined with vermouth. It also has function rooms and a ‘vermutería’ with 125 labels for tasting. The museum is over two floors. The ground floor houses the bar and restaurant, while the vermouth exhibition





is on the upper floor. During guided tours, the history of vermut is presented, enriched by anecdotes and curiosities.

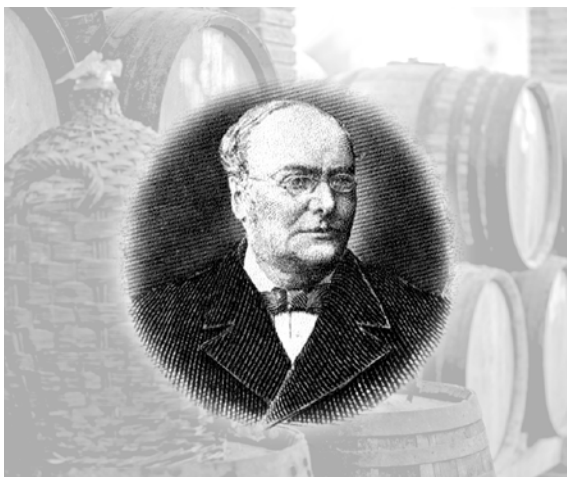
Today the “Ruta del Vermut” starts from Reus: it is a tourist itinerary dedicated to vermut, where the first stop is the famous museum, followed by a visit to the producing cellars. The second stop is the old factory of **Vermut Rofes**, in the centre of Reus, founded by Rafael Rofes Sancho in 1890. It has been converted into a restaurant, but maintains the full original structure and still has all the equipment used for production at the time. The family has been producing its vermut for four generations. Inside, there are casks with a capacity of 60,000 litres that are more than 100 years old, ancient bottles and original wooden cases. This place allows you to dive into the past to try to imagine how vermut used to be produced.



VERMUT
AT THE TOP, A ROOM AND THE MUSEUM RESTAURANT. ABOVE, THE VERMUTS ROFES RESTAURANT. ON THE RIGHT, VERMUT ROFES EXPERIENCE.



Another stop is the **Bodegas De Muller**. The company was founded in 1851 by Sr. Auguste de Muller and Ruinart de Brimont, a member of a well-known family of Alsatian winemakers. When they realised that the area of Tarragona had significant wine-making potential, they decided to settle in Spain. For four generations the company has belonged to the De Muller family and throughout its



DE MULLER
SOME
COMPANY
IMAGES. TOP
LEFT, AUGUSTE
DE MULLER.

history it has been a pioneer in terms of trade and technology. The company acquired the first industrial cooling chamber registered in Spain. This was essentially used to store Mass wine, since the Bodegas was a pontifical supplier from the time of Pope Pius X to Pope John XXIII.

Today De Muller belongs to the Martorelli family, Catalan entrepreneurs who are passionate about wine. They moved the plants to a new winery surrounded by vineyards on a property known as “Mas de Valls” in Reus (Tarragona). In addition to the Tarragona Designation of Origin,





al centre that at the time had about 400 inhabitants. Daniel Padró Porta (1846-1890) and his wife Rosa Valldosera were the first generation leading this winery.

At that time, the couple ran a small winery with little machinery (one wine-press) and a small factory where spirits were distilled to be sold as liqueurs and aniseed. The second generation, Daniel (1875-1953) and Juan Padró Valldosera (1878-1966), soon entered the business and were the real entrepreneurs who gave it an industrial bent, moving the alcohol factory, expanding it and building the premises that still houses the company.

Today the company is led by the fifth generation of Pradó, who maintain the same commercial and bottling philosophy of quality wines and vermouth. The vermouth range from this winery is split between Pradó & Co and Myrrha.

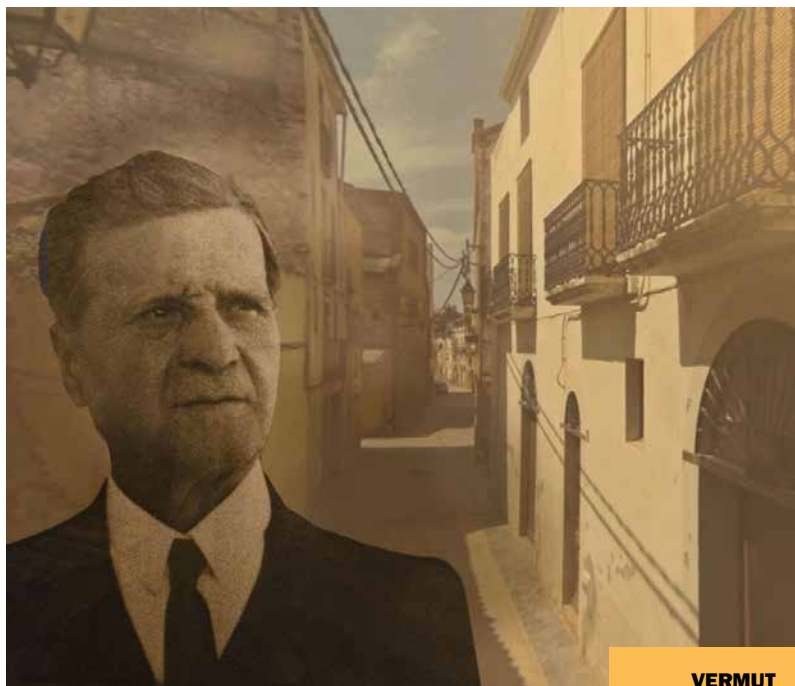
The origin of **Vermut Miró** takes us to Cornudella de Montsant, in the Priorat region, the home of the family of the same name where the manor house and cellar are still intact.

The Miró family produced aromatised and liqueur wines using the typical Montsant variety of grapes that was



this winery produces Iris Blanco, Rojo and Reserva vermouth.

Padró & Co. The wine-making origins of this family of producers date back to 1886 in Bràfim (Tarragona), an agricultur-



VERMUT
EMILIO MIRÒ
SALVAT.

spread throughout the region.

Then in 1957, Emilio Miró Salvat moved to Reus and, in the same year, founded the Emilio Miró Salvat, S.A. Since then,

Vermouth Miró is produced according to the original recipe, which has been kept unaltered and as a strict family secret to this day.



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Priorat B&D Lab is the newest of Reus' vermouths, created in the picturesque village of Bellmunt. Up to 50 years ago, lead was mined in the tunnels below the town. Today the region is dominated by wine growing and is one of the best wine regions in Spain. Dos Déus vermouths, launched in 2012, and Fontalia, rest for three years in ex-sherry casks before reaching the exact maturation point.

Bodegas Yzaguirre is a family-run winery that has been producing vermouth for over 100 years. Its beginnings were in the city of Reus, where Enrique Yzaguirre founded his winery in 1884 and began producing sweet wine and vermouth, of which he pioneered production in Spain. Since 1983 the Salla-Solé family has owned the winery now found in the nearby town of El Morell. It is making the company more international and introducing new products such as Sangria, sweet and sour vinegars, and wines. Up to 80 spices, aromatic plants and roots are used to make Yzaguirre vermouth. These are macerated in molasses alcohol and aged in oak casks to obtain unique aromas.



The Museu del Vermut is open all year round and entry is free. Today “fer el vermut” is not just about drinking – it is an essential time when friends or family meet that cannot be sacrificed. And this museum faithfully reveres our deep-rooted tradition.

Fortunately, there are people like Joan who encourage us to keep a bottle of vermut in our homes or in our bar, in a privileged and deserving place. For more information on the Ruta del Vermut visit www.reusturisme.cat.

Vittorio Brambilla





GRAPPA TO LOVE

A new project for a tradition worth rediscovering and using in new types of mixology

BY FABIO BACCHI

Over the last ten years, more and more specialised drinking options have been making their way onto the bartending scene – gin, rum, whisky and mezcal bars, as well as ver-

mouth, amari bars and establishments for any other spirit category. In this way, each of these have been provided with opportune ‘showrooms’ where new, increasingly more aware and informed consumers have



the chance to get to know, enjoy and accept these categories.

The contribution that mixing has made towards product usability has been significant, as well as the information that bartenders are relaying, and not least of all, the effort that companies have put into promoting products and their uses. However, this exhilarating offering has excluded the national spirit of Italy – grappa. Italian bartenders seem to have eliminated grappa from their drink strategies: be it right or wrong, we say they are making a mistake.

The intrigue that a dusting of foreign products wields on national bartending plays an important role. A different type of focus by grappa producers, a dogmatic view of tradition and certain stereotyped

prejudices on the use of grappa in mixology may be some of the factors that have excluded grappa from the bartending craze 2.0.

Grappa-based mixing is nothing new and in the past various companies and sector associations have moved in this direction. However, there has not been an overarching project involving various brands and styles of grappa, as has been the case for other noble spirits that have found in modern mixology a train worth boarding, and fast.

Indeed, some have tried to combine grappa in mixing to rediscover great classics, but without notable results. Often it has been the obstinacy of individual bartenders that turned on momentary spotlights, but a professional movement



regarding the national spirit as an ingredient worth focusing on, researching, experimenting and creating with never developed. The reason is easy to understand. Thinking of relaunching, or launching a product by focusing on the appeal of a drink and its history is a frivolous short

cut. The real problem is that grappa is not sufficiently known and interpreted in Italy; in most cases it is dismissed as a generic “pomace spirit” with a strong personality that tends to overpower the other ingredients in recipes.

This belief is founded, perhaps, in the past. Aided by more modern distillation techniques, today grappas have developed new identities that deserve further consideration. We must also bear in mind that grappa has very different styles and personalities throughout Italy. Today it is certainly easier than in the past to balance grappa in mixing when needed. Grappa remains a spirit whose stylistic complexity far exceeds that of other spirits. We believe that the universe of flavours and aromas that makes grappas unique and unparalleled is the starting point. In mixing, we must talk about grappas, not in



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GRAPPAS
MAURO UVA,
FRIULIAN
MIXOLOGIST.

the singular, without dwelling on standards of flavour which seem to be all too common with other spirits.

Identifying an evolutionary model of grappa consumption is today essential to mixology. “Unlike what is generally thought, mixing grappa is not difficult,” maintains Mauro Uva, a Friulian mixologist who is among the most accredited mixers of grappa in Italy. “In fact, we easily mix far more complicated spirits without any problems. Indeed, the main problem when using grappa is knowledge of the spirit. In mixing, grappa is still largely unknown.

With grappa you can’t generalise. It must be explored and understood.”

Grappa is to Italy what whisky is to Scotland. A grappa from Veneto will always be different to one from Tuscany. Every terroir, pomace, distilling method and producer’s style provides different and essential characteristics. “It’s always best to approach blending with it simply, and then be daring,” Uva continues. “In a Collins and Sour, a white grappa is preferable that is clean and not too aromatic. Those made from single grape varieties, even if they are smoother and more delicate on the palate, are the most difficult to mix because of their strong aromas from the single grape variety, which may not find balance within the recipe. But that certainly doesn’t mean that they are not mixable. In fact, in the hands of a mixologist, their strong aromatic profile will bring out the drink with fantastic and unexpected aromas. In certain great classics it is best to use a reserve. The time spent in the cask tempers its young, impetuous character, giving it roundness and complexity. Grappa is not gin, which tolerates and can cope with imperfect balances. It must be respected and handled with care.”

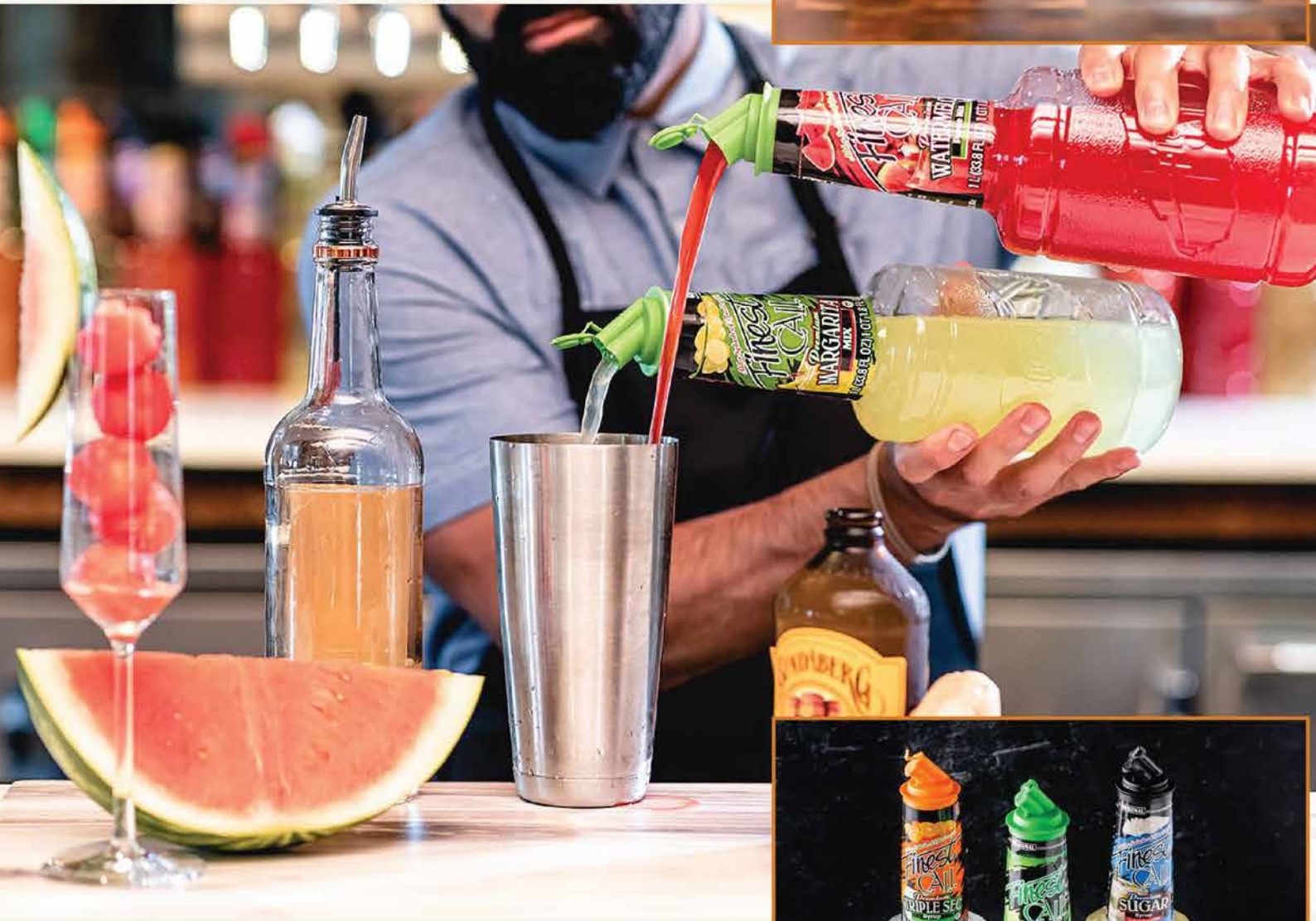
This year BarTales Magazine will go on an educational tour across the whole of Italy with one mission: to educate about grappas, their peculiarities and correct use in mixing. Eight of the biggest names in the Italian grappa industry will take part in this project. Every month we will dedicate a column to grappa and its world, its blending and best products. Because it is only right that the national spirit takes the place it deserves in bars all over Italy and that bartenders begin to consider it in their drink strategy.

Fabio Bacchi




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PRESERVERS OF TIME

The story of a special cognac and a small business that chose excellence

BY FABIO BACCHI

The story of Delamain and its famous cognac is a long one, spread across time through the generations. It is the story of a very small company of exceptional quality, which was always family-run, and that on the threshold of its 200th anniversary is fit to be showcased like never before. Preserved since the beginning as if hidden, Delamain is a real business, genuine, like few are, and as such also a special business.

The name Delamain is tied to the prized areas of the Grande Champagne, where the most famous French spirits are





HISTORY
ON THE LEFT
PAGE, JAMES
DELAMAIN.

born. Here the family owns a vineyard and its name points to certain beauty: “Belles Vignes”. While on the run from the Protestant reign of France, in 1625 Nicolas Delamain made his way to England. He was a man of honour and was knighted by King Charles I. The coat of arms bestowed upon him still represents the house’s trademark symbol today: three bloody crosses.

One of his descendants, James Delamain, arrived in Jarnac in 1759 from Ireland. On 24 November 1762 in France, he married Marie Ranson, the daughter of Jean Isaac Ranson, one of the earliest traders of cognac. They became business partners, and the company was renamed Ranson & Delamain. The business was successful and in the 18th century Ranson & Delamain was known as one of the leading cognac houses.

Towards the end of the century, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and the ensuing continental trade block-



age, as well as a strained relationship with his son, Jacques, all left their mark on James Delamain’s business, who died later in 1800. Complicated French inheritance laws saw the company divided up



between his seven children. The division was not rectified for two decades, and it took the efforts of Anne Philippe Delamain (James's grandson) to reunite the company along with two of his cousins from the Rouillet family. As a result, the name of the cognac house changed once more to Rouillet & Delamain. It was in 1824 that his grandson, Henri Delamain, created the Maison Delamain that we know today and although 1824 may be considered the official date the maison was created, the Delamains were in fact already producing cognac many years prior.

The name Delamain recalls one of the most exclusive cognacs made in France. Over the decades, the various members of the Delamain family who headed up the maison infused a part of themselves into this noble spirit. Open to the natural and humanistic sciences, archaeology, ornithology, history, writings, and botany, the Delamains perpetuate the founder's story and vision: to create an excellent product and maintain the artisanal spirit that has always been at the heart of the most iconic of cognac distillers.

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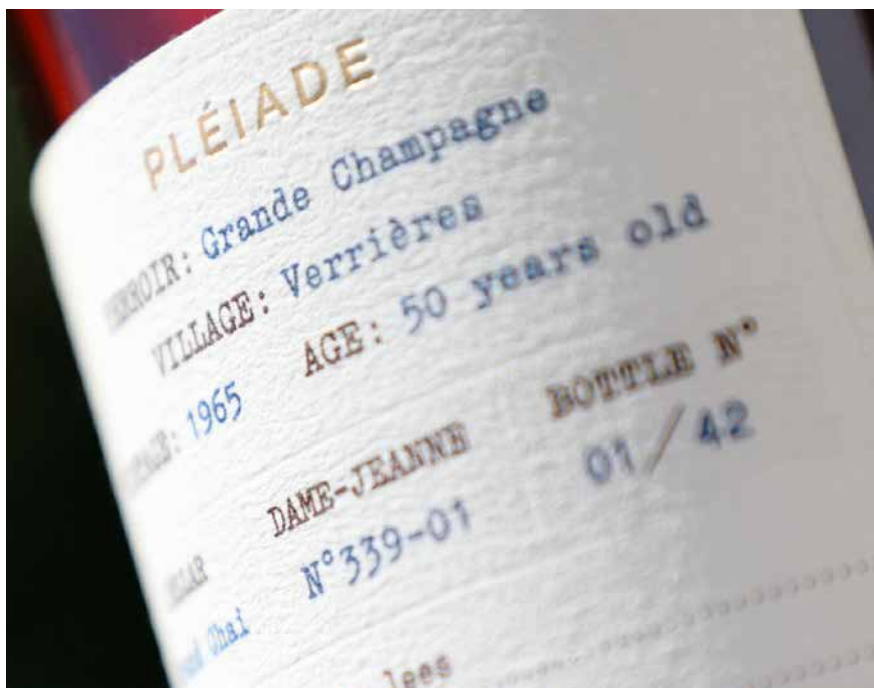


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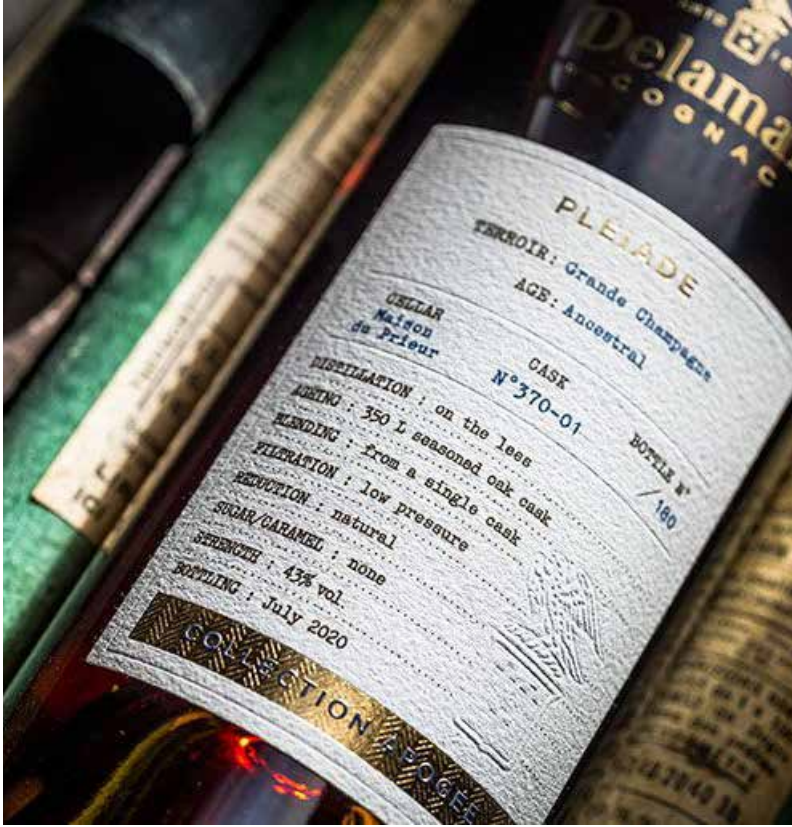
cognacs that inspires this family is found in the exclusivity of its spirits, which all carry the *Grande Champagne* denomination. In fact, Delamain only produces

cognacs with the designation of XO. Delamain's entry level product is aged for at least 20 years and the maison does not produce VSOP or VS products.

As it approaches its bicentenary, Delamain maintains excellence in every stage of cognac production. It applies methods that have been perfected over the centuries, mixing its spirits aged in old casks of French oak. Maison Delamain gives each cognac the time it needs to reveal the richness of its aromas.

Time is the powerful and silent catalyst of all the benefits of a unique approach to production. For these preservers of time, excellence does not take any short cuts. The Delamains' orthodoxy in producing cognac has remained unchanged through revolutions, wars, and social transformations. The maison's cellars are a jewel set in the ancient alleys of a historic district of Jarnac, the capital of cognac, whose walls are covered in a black fungus caused by the evaporation of the brandy, "La Part des Anges", or "Angels' Share".

In 1920, brothers Jacques and Rob-



ert Delamain decided to create a cognac that would embody the spirit of a new era, one that was modern and flourishing, capturing the beauty, art and essence of the natural world. Their vision, which constantly looked to integrity, authenticity and the sensory beauty of nature, gave rise to a cognac that was simply named Pale & Dry. A century later, this cognac – a liquid tribute to enlightened ways of thinking, joy and nature’s gifts – remains

a modern and timeless classic.

Maison Delamain includes its best spirits in three different collections making up the Pléiade line. These are exclusive cognacs that are characterised by the different casks used and their ageing period. Inspired by the brightness of stars, the name Pléiade refers to a group of stars, which thanks to their luminosity, have guided sailors since the time of the Ancient Greeks.

In over 40 years as Delamain’s Cellar Master, Dominique Touteau is by now closely tied to and has a deep knowledge of the special brandies produced by Delamain. In many ways they are his life’s work and among his proudest achievements. He and they have shared a life and are one in certain aspects.

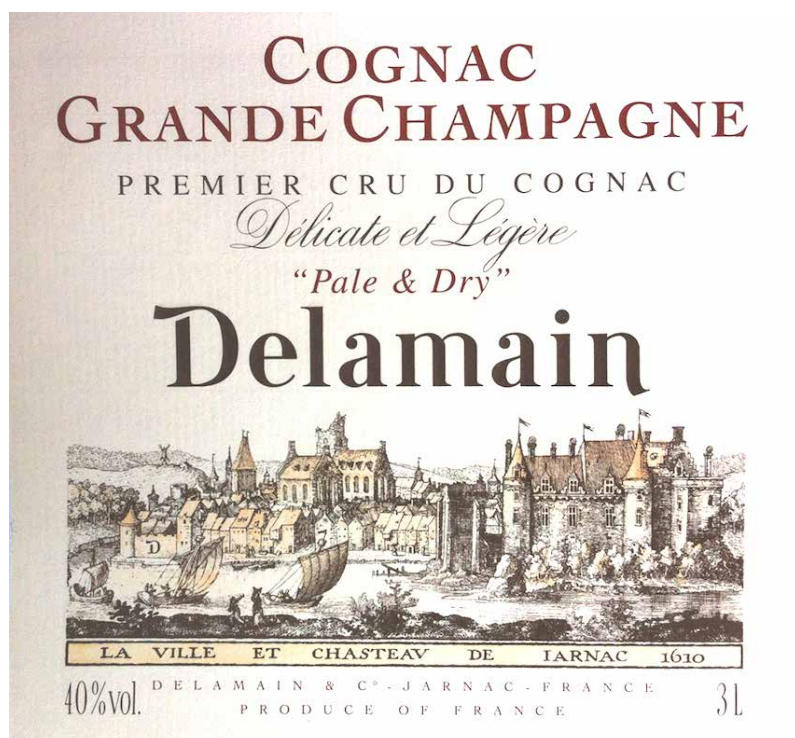
With the Pléiade collection, Dominique Touteau chose to share his intimate knowledge of these brandies with cognac



lovers: their origins, their journeys in the cellar, their personality and their individual histories. The three collections are the result of a single vintage, a single cru or a single cask, produced without added sweeteners or colourants, bottled as a limited release. The Pléiade range is developed to attract a new generation of drinkers, of spirits connoisseurs, who are knowledgeable and on the lookout for rare and unusual offerings with compelling stories behind them.

The Révélation collection includes a limited series of cognacs from the Mala-ville vineyard. The Plénitude collection is characterised by its intensity, which comes from long ageing. It offers a pure elegance with a sense of power that comes with maturity. Currently, Plénitude is a limited series of 1980 or 1988 vintages.

The Apogée collection features exceptionally old cognacs: eaux-de-vie so great that they have reached their apogee, their optimal aging in terms of quality and complexity; these are fully evolved cognacs.



Apogée is currently a limited series of 1965 vintage or ancestral.

Delamain is one of only a few select houses allowed to declare the vintage of its brandies. From 1962 to 1989 it was in fact prohibited to date cognacs, as it was not possible to prove the year of the distilled wine's production. This regula-



tion was imposed by the large commercial houses which had no interest in distributing expensive and high-quality spirits. Although this law effectively prohibited the sale of these spirits, in 1963 Delamain decided to dedicate one of its Jarnac “chais” (cellars) to the aging of vintage Cognacs.

Every year a freshly distilled Grande Champagne brandy was carefully selected and aged in oak barrels in this special cellar, the keys of which were kept by the Fraud Repression Service. Access to this very special room only took place with a supervising official present.

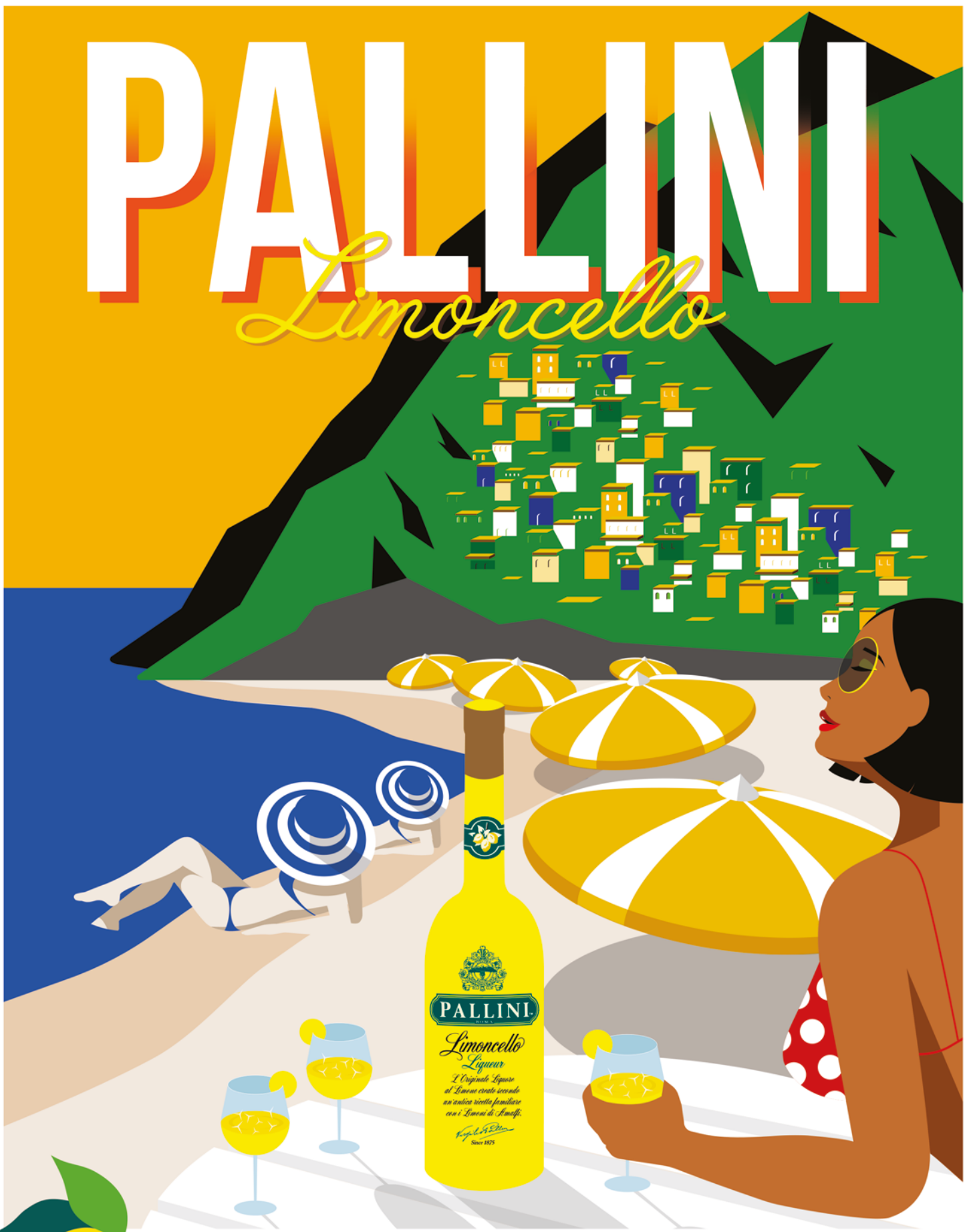
Choosing which young cognac to age is always very complex, especially when it is



to be bottled after many decades without cutting: it must have perfect aromas and balance.

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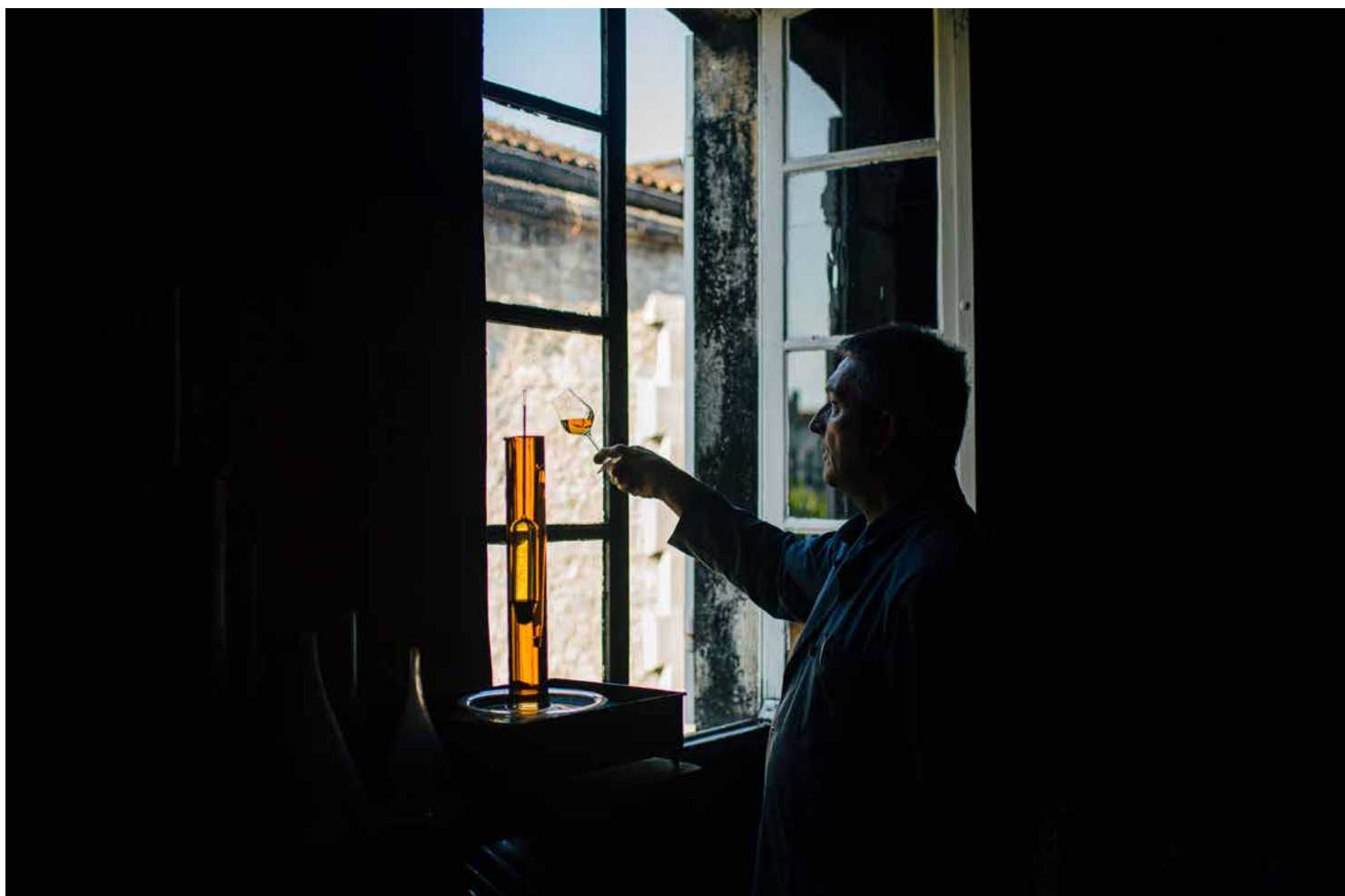


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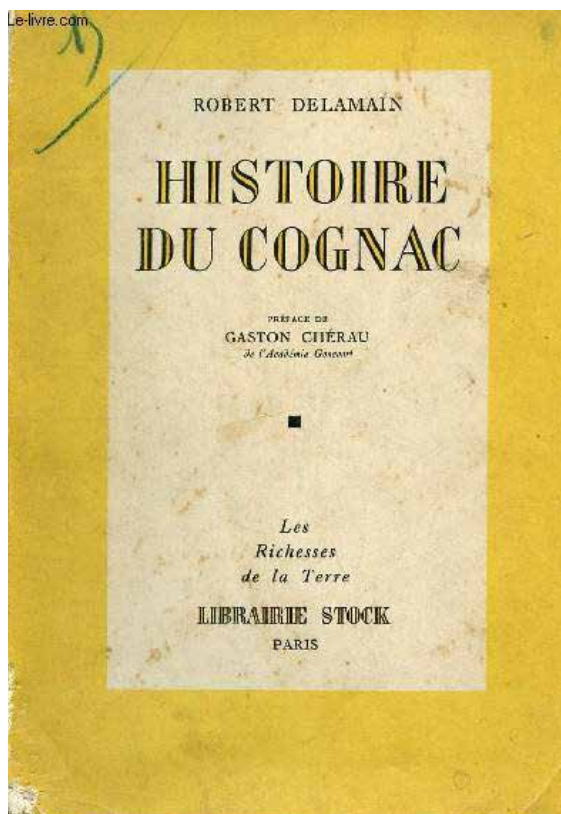


The regulation changed in 1989: the sale of vintage wines was again authorised on condition that their exact age could be proven. Delamain, whose ageing of vintage cognacs had always been checked by the authorities, was therefore able to resume selling these precious brandies.

Delamain is so highly regarded that samples of its vintages are at times requested by the authorities to be used as a probative comparison in Carbon-14 dating.

For those wishing to learn more about the history of the great cognac houses, we recommend the book “Histoire du Cognac” written in 1935 by Robert Delamain.

Fabio Bacchi





GRANDE CHAMPAGNE XO PALE & DRY

This cognac is produced using spirits from different properties found exclusively in Grande Champagne, to which a small quantity of “Vieilles Faibles”, also from Grande Champagne, is added. These are old cognacs where ageing has decreased the alcohol content, but has brought an extraordinary richness of aromas to them. X.O. Pale & Dry is aged between 20 and 25 years. It stands out for its lightness and delicacy, and its soft and velvety bouquet. This elegant and thoroughbred cognac matures in relatively humid *chais* that house selected Limousin casks which have already lost some of their tannins. It is light amber in colour, very bright and clear, and has a particularly lively brilliance, with gold reflections. Just a few drops in a glass are needed to allow it to develop a wonderful scent with aromas of citrus marmalade and floral notes that bring out exceptional freshness. In the mouth it is broad, with notes of vanilla and liquorice. It combines a full body with lightness and balance. The elegance and persistence of apricot, citrus and vanilla aromas stand out on the nose, while on the palate it expresses extreme delicacy and subtlety. It is never aggressive thanks to its long ageing. The finish encourages the sweetness of the fruits and its roundness. 40%



GRANDE CHAMPAGNE VESPER

Aged for over 30 years, Vesper differs from the previous cognac because of its more traditional style. The word “Vesper”, which in Latin means “evening”, represents the symbol of age and utmost respect given to the extremely traditional process it is made with. Created in the 1950s, Vesper X.O is a cognac consisting solely of spirits from the best vineyards of Grande Champagne. It is a fully matured cognac with excellent body. More classic and powerful than XO Pale & Dry, it is decidedly more amber in colour, with brilliant reflections of pure gold. Its highly evolved bouquet boasts a velvety boisé note that blends with hints of undergrowth and vanilla. In the mouth it is full, very mature with great body, roundness and a magnificent finish that is exceptionally long and velvety. 40%

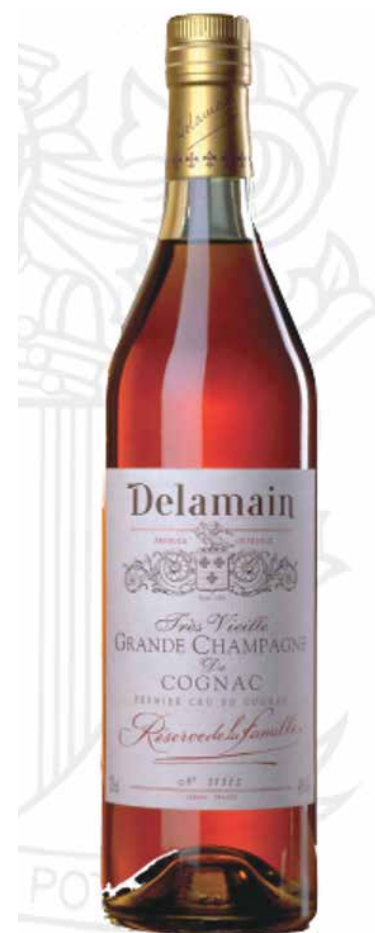
GRANDE CHAMPAGNE TRÈS VÉNÉRÉ

It is one of the most aged cognacs on the market, averaging more than half a century, and the subtle and delicate bouquet develops in the mouth with a great persistent. The full and complex aromas make it a distillate for knowledgeable connoisseurs. Noticeably paler than the Vesper, Très Vénéré is a very aged X.O. Pale & Dry and represents the pinnacle of Delamain's commercial range. Like all Delamain distillates, it is made exclusively with brandies from Grande Champagne, the heartland of cognac. Très Vénéré boasts maximum possible ageing in wood and expresses all the nobility of these brandies when they reach the apex of their evolution. Amber and a brilliant topaz in colour, with a wonderful and sweet golden transparency, it immediately strikes the nose with a lively authority that is velvety at the same time, making it irresistible. The complexity of the aromas makes it indescribable: as tasting goes on, the evolution of aromas allows for continued discoveries. It maintains an unexpected freshness in such a mature distillate. The distinction of this cognac is inimitable, but even more so is the perfection of its balance. 40%



GRANDE CHAMPAGNE RESERVE DE LA FAMILLE

Very few bottles were produced of this single cru cognac. A brandy distilled at the end of the last war, from a "Bouilleur de cru" from Saint Proeuil in the heart of Grande Champagne, it was judged to be exceptional by the Delamain family, so perfectly balanced that it was presented to the market intact and uncut. The long years in oak casks have enhanced its rare purity. This cognac was bottled at 43%, without artificially reducing the alcohol content it naturally reached after many years in wood.





COGNAC DELAMAIN EXTRA DE GRANDE CHAMPAGNE

This greatly aged cognac stands out for its roundness, elegance, and its fruity and ripe scent. It is presented in a decanter, with the coat of arms of the first Delamain who settled in Jarnac. The “Extra” indicates cognacs that are superior to XO. Delamain Extra is one of the very rare Extras that are 100% from Grande Champagne. Ageing of Delamain cognacs takes place in the “chais” (typical aging rooms) on the property, located not far from the banks of the Charente, to ensure an environment with humidity that suits long ageing. The so-called “fûts roux” 350-liter Limousin oak casks are used, which have already been used for at least 10 years so that the tannin levels are reduced. Delamain Extra Cognac is composed of an assembly of spirits that are more than 35 years old, and therefore older than the Pale & Dry X.O. and Vesper. After assembly, the Extra remains in wood for two more years to allow for a perfect “mariage” between the different brandies. Delamain Extra has amber shades and brilliant gold reflections. Its roundness and fruity nose are surprising. It has body and full maturity. The mouth confirms its roundness and presents no harshness; the softness and richness of ripe fruit aromas give it a velvety softness. The aromas are extremely persistent and complex.



DELAMAIN GRANDE CHAMPAGNE 1960

It hails from a plot of Grande Champagne located in Verrières, in the municipality of Ségonzac. It is an old distillate with a beautiful amber topaz colour, very bright with golden transparency. It has spicy aromas and hints of grapes, vanilla, honey, and liquorice. The wooded scent comes through clearly. In the mouth it is sweet, round and “moelleux”. Of endless persistence, it has the delicacy and aromas of a cognac that has reached full maturity.

APOGÉE COLLECTION VINTAGE 1965 DAMEJEANNE N° 33901

The Verrières of 1965 represents an important year in the history of Delamain. It is the epitome of what can be obtained with the best brandy up to maximum maturity. This extraordinary cask has remained in the same corner of the cellar, benefiting from the variations in temperature and flow of air year after year, evolving into a cognac of sublime intensity and richness. In 2015 it was transferred to a 30-litre demijohn to be accompanied over time and to preserve the unique flavours and aromas.

Dominique Touteau explains: “Born in 1965, this cognac is part of our experience, it represents who we are. It had the place of honour in the “Grand Chai” and was not moved throughout its ageing period. At the age of 50, having reached its peak, it was transferred to a 30-litre demijohn, thus materialising over time its magnificent aromas of apricot, candied quince and walnuts”.



APOGÉE COLLECTION ANCESTRAL FÛT N°37001

It comes from a single cask and represents one of the greatest expressions of the ageing of the Grande Champagne brandies. A rare cognac that has been judged so exceptional, so perfect, that it is presented intact, without any blending or reduction. It is refined in 350 litre “Roux” oak barrels (from the Tronçais forest) and then in a 30-litre demijohn.

This unique cask is kept in an emblematic area of the cellar, the Grand Chai, near the south-facing window. Ageing results in a cognac of extraordinary elegance and refinement. On the nose it has soft notes of spices and rich hints of orange marmalade. It has great complexity and intensity on the palate. The finish presents elegant aromas of cedar wood, walnuts, and orange peel.



PLENITUDE COLLECTION HORS D'AGE COGNAC VINTAGE 1980 CASK N° 21201

This series includes cognacs of 1980 – 1988 vintages. The 1980 vintage comes from vineyards in the village of Mainxe, between Jarnac and Segonzac. 1980 has special significance for Dominique Touteau as it is the year his Delamain adventure began. For 40 years this cask has been sealed with wax and has never been moved from the cellar.

On the nose it has persistence and power with warm autumn notes and of soft leaves, vanilla, and butter. On the palate it is lively and persistent, closing with nuts, spices and a more buttery texture. It is a cognac of undeniable charisma.

Dominique Touteau explains: “A 40-year-old cognac with special significance for me because it was born in the same year that I arrived at Delamain.

I have followed its evolution for four decades with particular enthusiasm. I am proud to offer this Cognac, whose autumnal aromas make it a distillate of undeniable charisma”.



RÉVÉLATION COLLECTION MALAVILLE VINTAGE 2000 CASK N° 70901

Produced from the 20-hectare “Bellevigne” vineyard in the village of Malaville, in the heart of Grande Champagne, one of the most beautiful cognac terroirs. On the nose are hints of vanilla and ripe cherries, muscat grapes, quince, figs, spices, and soft leather. On the palate: freshly ground pepper and a hint of oak linked to the complexity of its natural sweetness and a buttery finish.

Dominique Touteau: “This cognac comes from a magnificent 20-hectare vineyard. Distilled in a small alembic, it was aged in one of my favourite cellars. I personally selected it because of its fruity body, with its enveloping aromas of fresh fig, vanilla, soft leather, and spices”.

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AMARO FORMIDABILE

When Armando Bomba decided to start producing an amaro, he did not improvise. Already with substantial experience as a professional bartender, he immersed himself in the history of the Italian amaro tradition. During his extensive reading and research, he met ancient witches and sorcerers, ancestral recipes and herbaria in monasteries, ter-

ritorial traditions and legends, as well as old and new pharmacy practices, niche products and consolidated industrial enterprises.

That extraordinary collection of liquor-related documents and literature passed down over the centuries was the starting point for offering the consumer a contemporary and quality product that was decidedly natural and made from ex-

cellent ingredients. The time came to put what he had learnt into practice. With his partner and old friend, Franco Spagnoli, in 2014 Armando Bomba started up the project and decided to turn his entrepreneurial vision into a reality: creating an amaro where the entire production process was manual and artisanal, from the mix of herbs, to the label and wax seal, which always indicates the taste of good things. Amaro Formidabile was born.

Success favours the brave, they say, and so in 2015, the first few hundred bottles, which were filled in the liquor laboratory in Roma in that first year, soon became 10,000. And then a series of awards followed like few have received over such a short time: the Grand Gold Medal at the Spirits Selection 2018 in Brussels and another gold in its category at the International Spirits Challenge 2019.

News out of the Italian spirit industry in early 2022 is that Amaro Formidabile has been purchased by Pallini Spa, which has started production at its premises in Rome. “Since the beginning we have admired the birth and evolution of Amaro Formidabile with interest and intrigue,” says Micaela Pallini, president of the company. “Amaro Formidabile can be considered the first of the new generation of amari that have sparked some life into the market over these last 5 years and the fact that it was our neighbour immediately caught our attention.”

Amaro Formidabile is a natural amaro, craft-made thanks to a process where aromatic and officinal plants are macerated in pure wheat alcohol. Although it has common traditional roots, in Italy every amaro is distinctive in some way, and while it still has strong ties with tradi-

AMARO FORMIDABILE

ROMA

ELIXIR AMARICANTE FINISSIMO





tional recipes, this amaro comes with an exclusive formulation and original style.

Amaro Formidabile is cold macerated in wheat alcohol using various botanicals, with no additives, colourants, caramel or artificial or natural aromas. All the ingredients are strictly genuine. Production sets itself apart as being almost entirely manual.

The unique aromatic complexity of Amaro Formidabile arises from the combination of herbs, flowers, barks, roots and fruit peels with higher concentrations than the literature on the subject has ever suggested. Among its botanicals we find red cinchona, Chinese rhubarb,

rosa moschata, Roman wormwood, gentian, bitter orange peel, burdock, kola nut, star anise, milk thistle and more. The botanicals are macerated at room temperature in a hydroalcoholic solution inside the macerator for a period ranging between 23 and 27 days. During this time the tincture undergoes a controlled pumping over process until the 21st day. After resting for three days, the liquorist decides whether to stop macerating or continue with extraction to reach complete aromatic balance in the plant-based mixture.

After maceration, manual pressing is done which allows for soft separation of

the extract from the herbs. At this stage the extract will undergo a first, coarse filtration. It is filtered and combined with a mixture prepared with sucrose, demineralised water and the alcohol needed to reach the final ABV of about 35%. It is mixed again for 24 hours with 7 suspensions programmed by means of an agitator tank. After a period of stabilisation of about 15 days, the product is filtered again, first with brightening filters and then with sterilising filters. It is then left to mature in small 500-litre stainless steel tanks for about 3 weeks. After bottling, the liqueur rests for another short period before being sold.

“The process is long and labour-intensive,” explains Pallini Spa, “and we intend to faithfully follow the founder’s recipe, so the quantities will certainly not be large. Almost two months pass from infusion to bottling and the product is so delicate that we will focus on producing small batches. For this reason, we will sell only to order.”

The naturalness of the product is also highlighted on the elegant label that has a futuristic look and that bears the year of production. This detail – confirming the completely natural source of the plant-based raw materials, which are obviously never the same from one harvest to the next – will help to interpret the product’s flavour evolution over the years.

Amaro Formidabile is a shimmering amber colour, enhanced by the ultra-clear glass of the bottle which gives it a precious and inviting transparency. The aroma seems to develop over many dimensions and sensations. It is citrusy, slightly smoked, with unique notes of marzipan and toasted cocoa beans. The texture is silky, rounded and concentrated, instantly



enveloping, warm and almost chewy. In the mouth it is incredibly complex: the sensations evolve almost simultaneously while keeping the individual characteristics of each one separate. The main flavour is dominated by the fresh aroma of three types of citrus; the spices are dominated by cloves and coriander, a hint of aniseed, wormwood grass and hot pink nutmeg. This is followed by toasted wood, oriental and evocative of super concentrated botanicals. It is intriguing how elements that are completely absent come through: such as liquorice, bitter almond or coffee beans covered in dark chocolate. The finish is very long and deep in



PRODUCTION

MICAELA
PALLINI AND
ARMANDO
BOMBA.

which the incensed and bitter notes are unforgettable in a persistent memory of rhubarb candy.

Amaro Formidabile must be served cold, strictly with no ice, in small liqueur glasses. The highly digestive benefits of all the natural botanicals used in preparing it make it the ideal after-meal companion. It prefers an aromatic pairing when combined: great crus of bitter chocolate and candied orange peels, it is exceptional with soft Sassello amaretti.

It is not only geography that brings the Pallini company and its president together with the creator of Formidabile: “Armando is very skilled,” underlines Micaela Pallini, “and is extremely clear on the type of

product the public must have. The Formidabile recipe was defined after numerous tests, first in the kitchen (in his home where he did the first infusions) and then in the field with hundreds of tastings. A network of contacts helped to test Formidabile with Roman consumers. A very esteemed and respectful relationship was born between us which convinced Armando that our company and family could be the vehicle to help Formidabile take that step which otherwise would not have been possible on its own.”

The particular complexity of Amaro Formidabile makes it an excellent meditation liqueur but also the perfect ingredient for customising high quality classic recipes.

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A PERFECT MATCH

The proof? A Collins with grappa and honey instead of sugar

BY MAURO UVA

Going back in time in search of old traditions, we come across a blend that has its roots in ancient popular customs. Honey and grappa have always been used together and will continue to be for a long time – in fact, I would say forever.

In the past, in the mountains and foothills, a honey/grappa mixture was considered a traditional medicinal remedy

used by the locals. Grandmothers did not frown upon a mixture of grappa, milk and honey as a flu remedy; in north-east Italy a shot of grappa was often accompanied by honey and cheese, and numerous Alpine liqueurs were based on honey and grappa.

Natural honey is obtained from the transformation, by bees, of flower secretions (nectar). Honeydew comes from the



secretions of certain insects that also feed on plant sap. The honey is then stored in the cells of the combs (in natural hives) or artificial hives – depending

on whether the bees are in the wild or kept by beekeepers. The quality of edible honey depends on the bees and their environment (climate, flora, etc.), but also



on a second factor: human involvement. To encourage honey production, extract it and make it available to the consumer, the producer must follow a number of procedures. Since honey made by bees that feed naturally is not always the same – on the contrary, it differs greatly from

one year to the next – some beekeepers feed their bees sugar water, setting up special dispensers that act as a sort of feeding trough. While this improves the overall yield of an artificial hive, it sacrifices the honey's aroma and flavour. In addition, humans influence the sensorial characteristics of the honey in many other ways, such as manipulating the flora surrounding the hives, the choice of harvesting period and the method (pouring, centrifugation, etc.), possible pasteurisation of the product, processing and storage conditions, etc.

Sugars are present in variable quantities in honey, but the average is around 70% to 80%. Of these, fructose and glucose monosaccharides go from about 70% in honeydew honeys to almost 100% in some nectar honeys. Except in a few cases, fructose is always the highest occurring sugar in honey, because it is already contained in the nectar. Fructose makes honey sweeter than refined sugar, but is also a source of energy that our

body can use for longer. In fact, to be used, it must first be transformed into glucose and then into glycogen, which is our muscles' "fuel". Honey is therefore recommended for athletes before starting physical activity, thanks also to its calorie count, about 300 calories per 100 grams. Compared to honey, refined sugar contains sucrose, which is a disaccharide made up of glucose and fructose and has no vitamins and trace elements.

One of honey's most important properties is that it has antibacterial and antibiotic properties: many types of honey contain considerable amounts of hydrogen peroxide, the same substance usually used to disinfect wounds. The high temperatures honey is exposed to during pasteurisation neutralise some beneficial substances: to obtain the maximum antibacterial effect, raw, untreated honey is ideal. But beware, honey is also the third-most adulterated product in the world. World demand for honey is three times higher than its supply. In fact, due to many bees dying, mainly due to the use of pesticides in agriculture and climate change, production has decreased drastically.

Honey is a fantastic ingredient to use in mixing. Its wide variety means the flavour of a drink can be influenced by the honey used. The most bitter hints are found in chestnut honey, while for sweeter and floral notes we use wildflower honey instead. We must also remember all the various forest honeydews that can give our drink wild and woody scents.

Every self-respecting barman knows that raw honey is difficult to work with in mixing because of two main factors: firstly, due to its density, making it difficult to measure and secondly, because



of its tendency to crystallise when coming into contact with ice. To overcome this problem, the bartender uses honey mix, a mixture of equal parts of honey and water in which it is dissolved. This procedure, however, tends to halve the hints of honey and shorten its shelf life. A honey mix hardly exceeds three days because it does not have the same sugar content of honey which, with sugars making up 70-80% of its weight, prevent growth of bacteria caused as it quickly deteriorates.

There are some useful tricks for using raw honey in blending. Taking a Collins as an example, we can replace sugar with honey. Since honey is also soluble in alcohol, we can pre-mix it in the glass, without ice, together with lemon juice and the spirit. In this way we prevent the honey from crystallising by sticking to the glass or utensil. The second tip is to use the honey mindfully, to make it mixable without ruining its original properties. These give the drink flavour and provide the honey with its health benefits.

How to prepare it? It is best to read



the traditional home recipes in which honey was used to make winter flu remedies. The honey could not be spoiled in these formulations. By looking at these methods, we see that the honey was diluted naturally with the help of citrus peels. Honey is 70% sugar, which is a natural absorbent.

Contact between the sugars and citrus peels allows the essential oils of the lemon to be absorbed by the honey (think of an *oleo saccharum* made with honey). The honey is so transformed from solid to liquid in a completely natural way, leaving its beneficial and sensorial properties unaltered.

Honey oleo saccharum. Place 500g of honey into a glass jar and the peels of two untreated lemons in it, then close

the jar tightly. Leave the rinds in the honey for a maximum of 4 days, mixing at least twice a day without opening the jar (shaking it while closed). On the fourth day, filter the mixture and the mixing honey is ready.

Now we can indulge in it by mixing it with grappa. We can make a Collins with grappa and replace the usual sugar syrup with honey. You will see how the honey and grappa merge in a fantastic way, also giving texture to your drink. Or try to build an Old Fashioned by replacing the sugar cube with honey and the whisky with a reserve or extra-aged grappa. Grappa does not produce considerable results in terms of body and aromas when using a sugar cube, but with honey the result will amaze you.

Mauro Uva



"L'essenziale bellezza del lusso"

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