



Grappa

Famous throughout the world, grappa is an Italian distillate derived from marcs of grapes grown and vinified exclusively in Italy. The European Council Regulation No 1576/89 of the 29th of May 1989, in fact, states that the name grappa can only be applied to distilled grape marcs resulting from the racking of red wines produced exclusively in Italy.

In this case the marcs are already fermented, and then ready to be distilled. But there are two other types of marcs with which to get grappa:

1. semi-virgin marcs, obtained in rosé wine (so racking a rosé wine and the marcs that have undergone partial fermentation);
2. virgin marcs obtained by the "draining" in white winemaking for white wines. In this case, the marcs have not undergone any significant fermentation.

As grappa is obtained solely from fermented grapes (this is the main difference with the grape distillate), virgin or semi-virgin marcs should be required to undergo fermentation before starting distillation.

High-quality Grappa requires that, prior to distillation, to separate the seeds (the stalks, which give very bitter hints, have already been eliminated by the winery that produced the wine).

Grappa, which is a distillate of fermented grapes, is not to be confused with grape Acquavite, which is rather a distillation of wine. Similarly, the Grappa is not a distillate of wine (such as Brandy, Cognac or Armagnac). So marcs distillate, grape must distillate and wine distillate are three different beverages.

The quality of grappa depends primarily on the quality of grape marcs used, and secondly, on the skill of the master distiller.

The stills are divided into two main categories, continuous and discontinuous. The former work, as their name implies, all the time. Powered by marcs, they return an alcoholic phlegm which is then elevated to the rank of Acquavite through a second distillation. In the second you load in the boiler (or cucurbit) the material to be distilled, it heats up, there shall be the exhaustion of alcohol and aromatic substances contained, making great care to pick only the heart, and finally, the boiler is unloaded.

The best distillation occurs slowly, gently, by means of old traditional stills, where the steam passes through the spongy mass of marcs to extract the less volatile part and transmit to the vapor its aromatic substances.

Aging, which is not essential, occurs in precious wood barrels, which confers to grappa, through the transfer of tannins, their aromas giving us a nobler and more complex distillate. The tasting characteristics will be acquired depending on the type of wood, the time spent by the grappa in the barrels and the climatic conditions in which aging occurs.



Grappa - History

The history of grappa is lost in the mists of time. The distillation methods have been developed from the eighth and sixth centuries BC Mesopotamia, and the first evidence of those applied to the vines to get Acquavite date back to not before the twelfth century by the alchemists. Even the distillation of the marcs probably has historical origins far away. According to a legend, it's attributed to a Roman legionary of the 1st century. BC, after his return from Egypt, to have stolen a distillation plant, and using the techniques learned to have started the production of a distillate from the dregs of a vineyard where he was assignee in Friuli. According to the historian Luigi Papo, the first documented production dates back to 511 AD Friuli, by the Burgundians that, during a brief installation in Cividale, applied the same techniques used in the distillation of cider to the distillation of marcs, thus obtaining grappa. The techniques for distilling true grappa were coded by the School of Salerno around the year one thousand. In 1779 the birth of the Nardini distillery in Bassano del Grappa (VI), with the introduction of the method of "steam distillation", causes a revolution marking the start of modern distillation in Italy. Until the fifties, in Trentino, the most widely practiced technique, however, is distillation with fire. With this method the marcs are heated with fire bringing them to the boil; the alcohol thus obtained in the form of gas is subsequently condensed. Until the seventies classic grappa was manufactured by undifferentiated marcs. Only a company in Piedmont, the Bocchino di Canelli Distillery, in the heart of Asti, used to produce or some time (1898), a grappa from the only Moscato marcs, abundant in the area. The idea of producing a range of so-called single-variety grappa, which is produced from a single grape variety, has in fact changed the perception of grappa from a low-level product to a fine distillate; This "Copernican revolution" in the world of grappa is due to the Nonino family that, in 1973, records the term single grape variety (in particular to recover the distillate Picolit, a native grape from Friuli which threatens to disappear). We owe the Nonino family in 1984 the birth of grapes Acquavite, distilled from grapes, understood as fruit.