



## Taboo Absinthe - Okanagan Spirits

The history of Absinthe is long and convoluted. There is plenty of misinformation about the effects of Absinthe, not to mention the laws regarding it. Because of all this misinformation, Absinthe has gained a reputation as a sinister spirit with psychoactive properties. The truth is much different. Absinthe does not have hallucinogenic or aphrodisiac properties, nor does it have any effects similar to marijuana. The reality about Absinthe is being promoted by groups of dedicated Absinthe advocates, like the Wormwood Society. There are also a handful of distillers producing this, once immensely popular, spirit in an artisanal fashion. One of these distillers is Okanagan Spirits, a producer of quality eaux-de-vie's and now Absinthe, located in the Okanagan Valley region of British Columbia, Canada. In the coming months they will be releasing Taboo and here is a sneak peak at what they have to offer.

For a person who has never tried a true Absinthe, which is most people, it isn't as mystical, or scary, as some would have you believe. The flavour profile of Absinthe is strongly anise (licorice) based. There are a variety of other herbs that provide complimentary flavours, such as mint and lemon balm, but the key one is Grand Wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*) which imparts a pleasant bitter quality. The nearest comparison, to Absinthe, would be a French Pastis like Pernod or Henri Bardouin. Pastis was created after Absinthe was banned in France (1915) to appease a population that had grown accustomed to drinking the anise flavoured spirit. With pastis a number of changes took place, the main one being that pastis is sweetened and bottled at a lower proof than Absinthe, so it really isn't a true comparison, but there are similarities.

Part of the attraction of Absinthe is the fact that so many countries outlawed its production. This had the affect of people wanting what they could not have, and it created this "mysticism". But thanks to a group of very curious individuals, the reality of Absinthe is becoming much clearer. Current research shows that thujone, a component of wormwood, has no narcotic, hallucinogenic or aphrodisiac effects. Governments that once banned Absinthe, are reviewing the data, and the laws, and slowly allowing the re-introduction of this spirit to the market. This has opened the door for distillers, like Okanagan Spirits, to produce this classic spirit once again.

## Q & A with Okanagan Spirits about Taboo Absinthe

1. Why did you decide to start producing an Absinthe? Our main products are Eaux de Vie, which are distilled from fermented fruits. Sometimes the fruit does not carry as much aroma as we would need for our very high quality standards. So we would have top class alcohol derived from wine or fruit wine that had no home. Therefore I came up with the idea to produce a Swiss Herb, which is a product that contains a number of the same ingredients as Absinthe, however, without the wormwood. To attend to a broader customer base I decided to distill Absinthe after I learned to deal with the ingredients from a colleague of mine, from Switzerland.

2. Do you see the market for absinthe increasing because of the easing of laws, or because of the mysticism behind absinthe? Both. The mysticism, however, will fade after people learn more about Absinthe. To me - and this is purely personal - Absinthe is one of the finest summer drinks. A refreshing aperitif - a conversation drink at a party, to mention two fitting occasions.

3. What sets Taboo Absinthe apart from the mainstream products like Pernod Absinthe?

Our Absinthe is produced according to the original recipes based on Alcohol derived from wine (not grain alcohol). Our ingredients are real herbs and spices including real wormwood and they are fine distilled to perfection. Our products do NOT contain any artificial flavours, artificial coloring. They are 100% natural. However, will fade after people learn more about Absinthe. To me - and this is purely personal -

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4. Why did you create two varieties, green and white, to start?

To adhere to the friend of Verte and blanche. Both have been approved for sale by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the LCBO. According to the product label Taboo is made from: Fruit-based alcohol, Artesian well water, wormwood, green anise, star anise, hyssop, melissa, fennel, and petite wormwood. It has an alcohol content of 60%.

## Taboo Absinthe Verte Review

**Appearance:** Light minty green.

**Louche:** Turns opaque with a hint of green with equal amounts of water and then turns an opaque creamy white with a 3:1 ratio.

**Aroma:** Perfumed anise aromas with wormwood and hints of mint and other herbs.

**Taste\*:** Anise, wormwood, mint with a slight fruity sweetness and a bit of bitterness. Long smooth finish of anise and wormwood.

**\* 3:1 Water to Taboo, No sugar added**

**This is a very pleasant absinthe with an outstanding aroma.** When you open the bottle the aroma spreads through the room. Upon adding water the aroma becomes even more apparent. If you live in Canada I would highly recommend purchasing a bottle.

Taboo Absinthe should hit the market in October 2007 with a price of \$55.00 for a 500ml bottle. Initial distribution will be in British Columbia and Alberta, but it has been approved by the LCBO so case quantities should be available in Ontario. Other regions will follow.

Tags: absinthe

Posted by Darcy on August 28, 2007 6:56 PM | [Permalink](#)

## Taboo Absinthe Comments

The only pity is, that there is already another absinthe with a very similar name (Tabu) - may be it is not fine made like this one, but I don't think, that it is good to have two products in one category which sounding the same...

Absinthe is IMO overrated. As the "classic" anisées or rather pastis' it has a very strong aroma, so its difficult to mix with (except of a Sazerac, for which you just rinse the glass with Absinthe).

And if you drink Absinthe just like that (with iced water), you will struggle to taste anything else in the next half an hour... On the good side is: if you drink absinthe, you can be sure that you don't have halitosis!