

DIY ABSINTHE KIT FROM LDF

ABSINTHE BUSINESS Liqueurs de France (LDF) has launched a range of single-distilled botanicals and blending kits, allowing mixologists and enthusiasts to construct their own absinthe.

LDF, absinthe importer and owner of the Enigma absinthe brand, has released eight individually distilled botanicals and an Esprit Vert (green spirit) used for colouring.

The wine alcohol distillates include: wormwood, green anise, sweet fennel, coriander, hyssop, star anise, angelica and genepy, and come in 200ml bottles at 60% abv, priced at £15 in the UK. A wooden box set combines the six most commonly-used botanicals – wormwood, green anise, sweet fennel, coriander and hyssop – with an RRP of £90.

LDF said the distillates, produced at the same distillery in France as the Enigma verte and blanche absinthes, could be used by professionals to familiarise themselves with each of absinthe's constituent parts.

"By making these botanicals available as individual distillates we are giving people a unique opportunity to create an absinthe to their own personal specification," said LDF owner Ian Hutton.

"Both our Enigma verte and blanche are made by this technique, which allows fine tuning of the blend. The botanicals are also valuable in their own right as rare ingredients for cocktails and bitters."

TARIQUET SCORES A CENTURY

A UNIQUE Armagnac blend including an almost forgotten grape variety has been created to mark the centenary of the Grassa family's association with Château du Tariquet.

Although Armagnac has been made at the property since 1683 and the reign of Louis XIV, Tariquet was bought by Pierre Artaud, grandfather of Hélène Grassa, in 1912.

The fifth generation of the Grassa family, which is now in charge of the property and its 900 hectares (ha) of vineyards, celebrated the occasion with family, friends and business associates on 7 June 2012.

Over the past century, Tariquet has become best known for its table wines, but it still has 100ha of vines devoted solely to the production of its Armagnacs under the Bas-Armagnac appellation.

Now a special commemorative bottling, L'Armagnac du Centenaire, has been created to express the distinctive "tawny sands" terroir of the area in a blend of four Armagnac grape varieties.

These include Ugni Blanc for freshness and finesse, Baco for power and fire, and small amounts of Folle Blanche, prized for its delicacy and floral character, and of the almost extinct Plant de Graisse.

Reintroduced into the Tariquet vineyards in 2001, Plant de Graisse (graisse means grease in French) takes its name from the viscous musts that produce fresh but virile wines that are perfectly suited to distillation.

L'Armagnac du Centenaire is a blend of eaux-de-vie aged for between 10 and 30 years, with an average age of 20 years, and is bottled at cask strength, 53.5% abv.

To mark the year, only 2,012 bottles have been produced, available boxed from the property for €180 from July this year.



BLACK SEAL FINDS "PERFECT MATE"

BERMUDAN RUM brand Gosling's Black Seal has taken the unusual step of creating its own ginger beer to provide the perfect combination for its country's signature cocktail, the Dark 'n' Stormy.

Gosling's Stormy Ginger Beer took well over a year to perfect, after the producer grew frustrated at seeing its rum paired too often with ginger beer that was either too sweet or too spicy.

"We needed to hit the perfect balance

between sweetness and spiciness," said Malcolm Gosling, seventh generation president of Gosling's Export (Bermuda) Ltd.

"Our objective was to create a ginger beer that, when paired with our award-winning Gosling's Black Seal rum, would produce the absolutely perfect Dark 'n' Stormy."

Gosling's Stormy Ginger Beer will be distributed by Love Drinks Ltd in the UK, and is available from Venus at £11.99 for a case of 24 cans.

