

A Practical Treatise on the Raw Materials and the Distillation and Rectification of Alcohol and the Preparation of Alcoholic Liquors, Liqueurs, Cordials and Bitters.

By William T. Brannt

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PRACTICAL TREATISE

ON THE

RAW MATERIALS AND THE DISTILLATION AND
RECTIFICATION OF ALCOHOL,

AND THE

PREPARATION OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS, LIQUEURS,
CORDIALS, AND BITTERS.

EDITED CHIEFLY FROM THE GERMAN OF

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ILLUSTRATED BY THIRTY-ONE ENGRAVINGS.

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Absinthe forms a considerable article of commerce and consumption, especially in France, where large quantities of it are manufactured in Pontarlier, Montpellier, and Lyons. In consequence of the presence of a large quantity of volatile oils (especially oil of anise and fennel), absinthe, when mixed with water, gives a milk-white liquid which is considered a proof of its good quality. It should have a mellow, agreeable, aromatic, and somewhat sweetish taste.

The following receipts are, according to Duplais, used for its manufacture on a large scale, the proportions being calculated for 100 liters (26.41 gallons) of liquor ready for use.

1. Large wormwood, dried and cleansed, 2.5 kilogr. (5.5 lbs.), green anise 5 kilogr. (11 lbs.), Florence fennel 5 kilogr. (11 lbs.), spirits of 85 per cent. 95 liters (25.09 gallons).

Macerate the vegetable substances in a water-bath at least 12 hours, then add 45 liters (11.88 gallons) of water and distil off 95 liters (25.09 gallons). (For apparatus used see Fig. 29.)

The absinthe has now to be colored green. This is effected with : Small wormwood dried and cleansed 1 kilogr. (2.2 lbs.), dried spikes and blossoms of hyssop 1 kilogr. (2.2 lbs.), balm of Gilead, dried and cleansed, 0.5 kilogr. (1.1 lb.), and aromatic distillate (see above) 40 liters (10.56 gallons).

The wormwood is cut and the other herbs pounded in a mortar, and the whole slowly heated until the heat in the helmet of the apparatus indicates that the liquid has commenced to boil, when the fire is quickly extinguished. Before taking the mixture from the still, it is allowed to cool off entirely ; it is then strained through a hair sieve and the remaining 55 liters (14.52 gallons) of distillate are added. It is finally brought to 100 liters (26.41 gallons) of 74 per cent. by the addition of 5 liters (1.32 gallons) of water.

Of the other mixtures used for the same purpose, we will only mention that employed in Montpellier. The manner of preparing the liquor is the same as above.

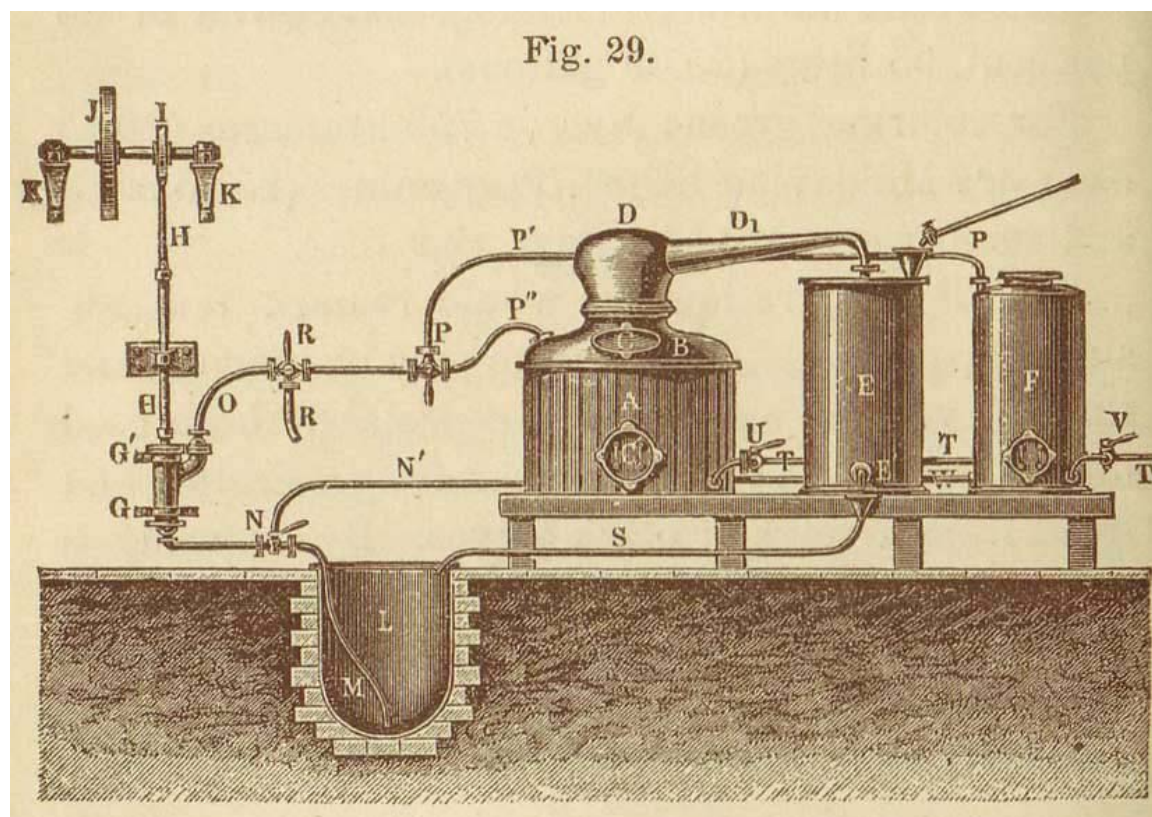
2. Large wormwood, dried, 2.5 kilogr. (5.5 lbs.), green anise 6 kilogr. (13.2 lbs.), Florence fennel 4 kilogr. (8.8 lbs.), coriander seed 1 kilogr. (2.2 lbs.), angelica seed 0.5 kilogr. (1.1 lb.), and spirits of 85 per cent. 95 liters (25.09 gallons).

For coloring green: hyssop 750 grammes (26.45 ozs.), dry Moldavian balm 750 grammes (25.25 ozs.), and small wormwood 1 kilogr. (2.2 lbs.).

For all preparations we would remark that absinthe acquires its mellow taste only by storing, and that the vegetable substances, especially those used for coloring, must be very carefully selected, and freed from green and black leaves. By cleansing is understood that only the spikes of the plants are to be taken. Distillation should never be carried on to the end, as the taste of the liquor would be too strong, and less fine.

The distillation of absinthe is effected in a still, with a very flat helmet in a water or steam bath. The volatile oils passing over with the low wine are of great value for the succeeding operations. The coloring requires great care. The residue can be used for coloring a portion of the absinthe, and is then redistilled, in order to regain the residue of spirit.

Fig. 29 represents the apparatus used for distilling absinthe. It consists of the following parts: A, a still covered with wood, which serves as a water-bath for the interior still, in which the herbs and liquid to be distilled are placed. B, cover of the still with aperture, C, for filling and emptying, and, C', for removing the plants after distillation. D, the helmet with the pipe, D'; E, cooler, with discharge, aperture, E'; F, coloring boiler with the necessary apertures and covers; G G', pump; H I J K, motive parts of the pump; L, metal receiver set in the floor; M, suction-pipe of the pump; N, cock; N' W; suction-pipe from the coloring boiler; O, delivery pipe; P, three-way cock with pipe, P', to the coloring boiler and pipe, P'' to the still ; R R, cock and pipe to the barrel ; S, discharge pipe to the receiver; T, principal steam pipe from the boiler; U, steam-cock of the still; V, steam-cock of the coloring boiler.



This apparatus performs the different operations in an excellent manner by the use of one pump which charges the still, A, with water, conducts the distillate into the coloring boiler, and the finished product into the barrels. This is done in the following manner:

Water and spirit, in a fixed proportion, are brought into the receiver, L, and the herbs into the still through the upper aperture; the conduit, M G P P", is then opened, and the contents of L pumped into A. After closing the conduit, steam is introduced through U, when the distillate, which is now aromatized, but colorless spirit, runs off through S. This is now pumped from L through M G P P' into the coloring boiler, F, which has in the mean while been charged with herbs. When the herbs are extracted, the colored liquor is pumped out through N', and conducted through R into the barrels, where the final mixture takes place.

Fig. 29.

