

UNIQUE MATURATION IN CASKS

Norwegian aquavit differs from the other Nordic aquavits because it is matured in sherry casks. The process is more or less identical to that used in the production of whisky and cognac, and places Norwegian aquavit in a class of its own.

Maturation is an important and costly part of aquavit production. It starts with the importing of 500-litre sherry casks from Jerez in Spain. These casks have previously been used in the production of Oloroso sherry for five to ten years. They give the aquavit its golden colour, the remains of the sherry give it a pleasant sweetness and the white American or Spanish oak provides hints of wood and vanilla.



The coopers still practise their age-old art and are invaluable in the maintenance of our large stock of casks.

During this period of maturation, considerable changes occur in the composition and character of the aquavit. A certain amount of oxidation alters the aroma of the herbs and spices. The alcohol extracts substances from the oak which also contribute to the chemical processes. The rawer, more volatile and somewhat aggressive aspects of the spirit vanish however, as some of the alcohol evaporates. We say that this is how the angels get their share and we have every reason to believe that they are very happy angels!

The maturation process follows a progression which varies for each brand. The clue is finding the perfect time to end the process of maturation, characteristic to each special aquavit brand.

The best known of all Norwegian aquavits is Lysholm Linie Aquavit, famous both for its unique maturation process and for its refined taste. It is made according to the traditional recipe of its creator, Jørgen B. Lysholm.



JØRGEN B. LYSHOLM

The name Jørgen Bernhoft Lysholm has become synonymous with Norwegian aquavit. However, the story really started with Catharina Lysholm, who built the brig «Trondhiems Prøve» in 1780, in collaboration with her brother, an important tradesman. There is proof that this sailing ship visited the East Indies in 1805 with a new product, potato spirit, as well as various other types of merchandise on board. This was a purely speculative enterprise, undertaken in the hope of opening new markets. When this attempt at selling potato spirit failed, the cargo was returned to Norway. Throughout the whole voyage, the potato spirit was transported as deck cargo. On arrival in Norway in 1807, it was discovered that the voyage had vastly improved the taste of the aquavit. This fact was kept a closely-guarded secret by the Lysholm family for many years.

Jørgen B. Lysholm himself was still a young man when he inherited



Jørgen B. Lysholm built his distillery in 1821. His Linie Aquavit was the first Norwegian high quality aquavit to achieve international fame and it still defends its position as the most famous and international of the Norwegian aquavits.

his father's soap factory near Trondheim and rebuilt it as a distillery in 1821. He had recently completed studies in chemistry and technology in Berlin. A short while later, he moved the distillery to the centre of Trondheim, built a new factory and offices and enlarged the warehouses. When Jørgen B. died, his son Nicolai took over and, at a later date, his younger son Claus Krabbe continued what was by now an important business, producing nationally and internationally renowned aquavit.

Responsibility for the production of Lysholm Linie Aquavit was taken over by the state monopoly on its establishment in 1922, but the secret Lysholm recipe and its traditional production methods were never altered. Even today, we are proud to continue the tradition of producing Norway's oldest and most prestigious aquavit brand exactly as it has been produced for more than 200 years. Today, the Linie Aquavit label still carries the signature of its creator.

The Norwegian aquavits are famous for their careful maturation. Jørgen B. Lysholm invented a unique maturation process, which gave birth to the name Linie, and is still in use today.

The label belonging to the oldest aquavit brand in the world, Lysholm Linie, was designed in 1850 and few alterations have been made since. It still bears the signature of its creator, Jørgen B. Lysholm. The aquavit recipe is still the famous, old Lysholm blend and the unique maturation concept still involves shipping the aquavit across the equator.



SOME JOURNEYS CHANGE YOU FOREVER

Over the years, there have been many theories as to how Jørgen B. Lysholm happened to discover the process of maturation which makes the Linie Aquavit so special. We do know that thanks to his aunt's efforts, the idea of exporting aquavit already existed. The logbook from her ship, «Trondhiems Prøve», states that it passed the equator on October 24th 1805, bound for the East Indies. Five casks of aquavit were later returned in 1807, unsold.

The positive effect of such a sea voyage on the maturation of the alcohol was commercialised by the Lysholm family, owners of «Nordstjernen» and «Gymer of Trondhjem». «Gymer» sailed around the world via Australia and her skipper was a marine officer by the name of David Lysholm, 3rd generation of the famous family.



«The Lysholm Lad» has been an integral part of the Lysholm label for more than one hundred years.

The Lysholm Aquavit's unique maturation process remained a carefully guarded secret for generations. Today, scientific knowledge confirms the value of the old tradition: The length of the trip, constant gentle rolling, varying temperatures and sea air on deck combine to perform a sophisticated kind of sorcery, smoothing and enhancing the flavour of the alcohol.

Sailing ships have long since vanished, but Linie Aquavit still crosses the equator. Since 1927, the Norwegian ship-owner Wilh. Wilhelmsen has assumed responsibility for this precious process. ISO 9000 specifications stipulate that the barrels must be transported as deck cargo. Each month new loads of oak barrels embark upon a four and a half month journey, taking them to 35 countries and crossing the equator twice during the voyage. At any given time, more than a thousand Linie Aquavit casks are maturing as deck cargo on the oceans.

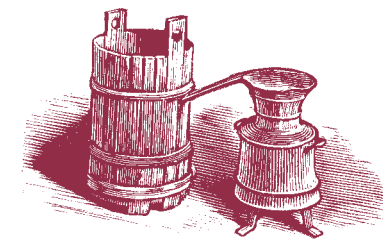
Every bottle of Linie Aquavit carries details of its voyage around the world via Australia on the reverse of its label. Even more importantly, every mouthful of Linie Aquavit contains memories of its sea voyage.

AQUAVIT - AN ANCIENT TRADITION

In April 1531, the Archbishop of Trondheim received a letter from Bergen, signed by the Danish Officer of the Crown, Eske Bille: «I send Your Grace some water called Aqua vitae. This water cures all types of internal diseases from which a human being may suffer.»

The Norwegian Vikings who lived more than 500 years earlier were not, of course, strangers to alcohol. They drank mainly mead, but were known to have brought wine home from some of their numerous «crusades» abroad. The honour of having introduced aqua vitae to Norway must however be attributed to Archbishop Olav Engelbrektsen of Trondheim.

The benefits of herbal remedies based on distilled spirits had long been recognised in Europe, where the Black Plague resulted in increasing demands for this particular «medicine». For many years, aqua vitae was used purely for medicinal purposes in Norway. It was distilled from grain and flavoured using a variety of herbs.



From 1600 onwards, distilling pans became a natural part of the Norwegian farmer's kitchen utensils. In 1827, 11 000 distilling pans were in use among a population of one million Norwegians and aquavit had become an integral part of their every-day diet.

As the process of distillation became more widespread, distilling pans became an increasingly common sight in farmers' kitchens throughout the country. By now, it had become customary to take this «medicine» in Norway and its life-giving qualities were greatly appreciated by the scattered, hard-working inhabitants of this cold, barren country. A glass of aquavit was to be recommended prior to starting work in the fields or forests on cold, dark winter mornings. It is also worth mentioning that alcohol was the only drink which did not freeze in the cold Norwegian winter.

As time went by, the many excellent reasons for enjoying aquavit gave rise to a somewhat exaggerated use of the spirit. This caused general concern and several legal restrictions were introduced, culminating in total prohibition, more than 200 years after the Archbishop had introduced the life-giving water.

However, rather than being the result of Norwegian morality, it is far more likely that prohibition was brought about by lack of grain, not to mention the prospect of increased tax revenues. As a result of political pressure, prohibition was eventually lifted for a period, the aim allegedly being to improve the farmers' economy. The potato had now also appeared on the scene.



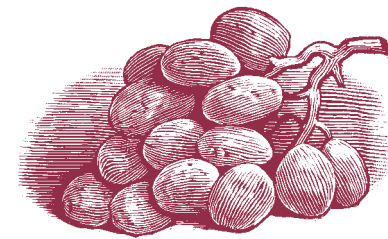
THE GRAPES OF THE NORTH

W ealthy Norwegians were known to have planted an exotic South American vegetable in their gardens. It was known as *Solanum Tuberosum* – the potato.

The vegetable was well suited to the Norwegian climate and soil. So well suited, in fact, that priests all over Norway praised its many virtues. The clergy considered themselves responsible for improving the farmers' living conditions. To quote a clergyman of former days: «The potato can be used in bread and as animal fodder, but is most suitable as raw material in the production of aquavit.»

High grain prices and the fact that potatoes yielded threefold, encouraged farmers to increase cultivation.

Some of the first written evidence of the potato being used as a raw material in alcohol production dates from 1791, when a certain Halvor Rasmussen Wang from Trondheim sent a petition to the King of Denmark, asking permission to produce alcohol from potatoes. He argued that his intention, apart from establishing his own business, was to help Norwegian farmers make better use of their agricultural produce.



The inhabitants of the arctic countries, suffering from the cold and poverty – the mother of invention – found a substitute for the wine they were lacking in grain, fruit and vegetables.

Improving the quality of both stills and alcohol became another important issue and it has since been discovered that the famous aquavit producer Jørgen B. Lysholm corresponded with experts in Germany. There, Joh. Heinr. Lebrecht Pistorius researched into new techniques and subsequently published a paper describing a new device for the distilling of cleaner and stronger alcohol in 1832.

Although the first distilleries had been established by 1800, it was only with the improvement of distillation techniques, combined with the introduction of the potato, that the spirit industry really flourished.

Alcohol produced from potatoes is clean, neutral and well-rounded, highly suitable for extracting aromas from the Nordic flora.



A GENUINE NORWEGIAN TASTE

Alcohol is quite unique as regards extracting flavour and aroma from herbs. The discovery of this fact led to significant progress within the field of medicine and an abundance of recipes. The number of ingredients employed could often exceed 100, and this gave rise to such expressions as «The greater the number of herbs and spices, the greater the number of diseases cured» or «The worse the taste, the better the results».

From being used purely for medicinal purposes, alcohol soon became more widespread, drunk to ease the strains of a heavy working day. Herbs and spices thereby assumed a new role – that of disguising the taste of simple, home-made alcohol and improving this life-giving elixir. To understand why this was of such great importance, one need look no further than to the highly unsatisfactory quality of the farmers' primitive kitchen stills. It was also quite natural for Norwegians of the time to pick caraway, juniper, angelica and aniseed in the fields and forests.



Fruit and herbs which mature in northern climates have a higher proportion of essential oils than those grown further south. The long days and short nights of the Norwegian summer produce plants with stronger flavours and aromas, which in turn provide Norwegian aquavit with its characteristic taste.

1776 marked the publication of the first detailed treatise to examine the making of aquavit and fruit wines. The author, Christopher Hammer, was an educated landowner and senior official dedicated to «chymia applicata», to use his own expression. His name will always be closely linked with Norwegian aquavit. Caraway aquavit and cinnamon aquavit, as the names imply, only contained one herb, while other aquavits could contain a mixture of herbs, roots, seeds or fruits of aniseed, angelica, wormwood, juniper, calamus, lemon balm, curled mint etc.

Caraway is still the most important herb in aquavit production, but dill, aniseed, sweet fennel, coriander and other related plants also play an important role. The long, light days and short, cool nights which are characteristic of the Norwegian summer, produce caraway of an exceptionally high quality. This may well explain the plant's dominant role in aquavit production.

Today, a number of farmers grow caraway in the fresh, unpolluted Norwegian countryside.

In ancient times, it was common for Greek citizens to carry a small box of caraway. This they ate during meals. The plant was considered to be a remedy for dizziness, stomach pains, asthma, breathing difficulties and heart diseases. Today, it is a proven fact that caraway aids digestion and increases the appetite.



MAKING THE MOST OF LINIE AQUAVIT

Aquavit is Norway's national drink. Not only because of its long history, but also because aquavit belongs on the Norwegian table, a fact recognised by traditionalists, modernists and connoisseurs alike. For confirmation of this fact, one need look no further than to the rapid increase in sales, surpassing that of any other type of alcohol.

The different flavors of Norwegian aquavits, most of them traditional brands. They vary in taste and method of production and the alcohol content varies between 37,5 and 41,5 percent. Over the centuries, Norwegians have become acquainted with the different tastes and chosen their favourites. Linie Aquavit has always been among the most popular.



The different flavours of Norwegian aquavits provide a fitting accompaniment to Norway's traditional dishes, including salted, smoked or cured meats, pickled, fermented or dried food, smoked salmon, sea-food and other specialities. It is particularly beneficial as an accompaniment to pork and other rich, fatty dishes.

Fatty and salty foods warrant the use of a digestif. Traditionally, aquavit is drunk as a chaser with beer, as a kind of «schnapps». The aquavit should be drunk after the beer and not before, so that its delicate taste lingers in the mouth. The oils and herbs present in aquavit have the same effects on digestion as they had in the olden days when it was drunk purely for medicinal purposes.

Norwegians believe that the subtle flavour of Linie Aquavit is best appreciated when the product is served at room temperature or, if necessary, slightly chilled. Irrespective of local culinary traditions, tastes and habits – for centuries the aquavit's capacity for aiding digestion has been appreciated in countries all over the world. It can either be used as an apéritif before the meal, as a digestif following the meal, or quite simply between courses. Or why not try one of our recipes.

Aquavit is best enjoyed straight, in small quantities. The traditional aquavit glass is fairly small. We recommend that Linie Aquavit either be served at room temperature or, if necessary, slightly chilled, so as to appreciate the special Linie flavour.



RECIPIES

Linie Elderflower

*4 cl Linie
1 cl Lime syrup
Elderflower soda*

Build all ingredients in a longdrink glass filled with ice.
Fill up with Elderflower soda.



Linie Citrus Crush

*3 cl Linie
1 cl Vikingfjord Citrus
1/2 Lime
1/2 orange
Chrushed ice*

Build all ingredients in a longdrink glas filled with ice.



Linie Cranberry

*4 cl Linie
2 cl Lime syrup
Cranberry juice*

Build all ingredients in a longdrink glass filled with ice.
Fill up with Cranberry juice.



Linie Fjellbekk

*2 cl Linie
2 cl Vikingfjord
1 cl Lime syrup
7up/Sprite
Red currant*

Build all ingredients in a longdrink glass filled with ice.
Fill up with 7up. Garnish with red currant.



Marinated salmon (gravet laks)

Salmon has always played an important role in the Norwegian diet and a variety of methods of preparing the fish have evolved over the centuries. Norwegian smoked salmon is particularly famous. Many Norwegians, however, prefer marinated salmon (gravet laks) to smoked. Marinated salmon is quite simple to prepare:

1 kilo (2 lb.) fillet of salmon (or red trout), frozen or fresh
2 tablespoons salt
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
3 teaspoons caraway seeds
2 teaspoons aniseed
8 cl Linie Aquavit

Crush the spices in a mortar. Place the fish on a serving dish, skin side down and rub on the mixture. Pour the aquavit over, cover with plastic and place a weight on top of the fish. Leave in the fridge for 3 – 4 days. The aquavit-flavoured brine which accumulates in the dish should be spooned over the fish daily.



Mustard sauce

In Norway «gravet laks» is served with a mustard sauce. Adding a dash of aquavit to the sauce works wonders.

3 tablespoons of mustard (sweet brand)
1 – 2 tablespoons sugar
1 – 2 tablespoons vinegar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ – 1 dl (3 – 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ fl. oz.) oil
2 – 3 tablespoons chopped dill
water
Linie Aquavit

Add sugar and vinegar to the mustard according to taste. Add the oil gradually, while stirring. Add a little water if the sauce becomes too thick. Finally, add the finely chopped dill, Linie Aquavit and season as required with salt and pepper.



Cured game

By «game» Norwegians usually mean elk or reindeer, but any game will do. A less «wild», but extremely tasty version can be made from beef. The following recipe is sufficient for six portions.

1 kilo (2 lb.) sirloin steak of wild game or beef
3 tablespoons salt
3 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
2 teaspoons dried thyme/sweet basil
2 dl Linie Aquavit

Cut away the tendons, membranes and fat from the meat. Rub in a mixture of salt, sugar and herbs. Place the meat in a dish and pour the aquavit over. Cover with foil and leave 4 – 5 days in the fridge. Turn the meat daily. Remove the herbs. Cut the meat in thin slices prior to serving.



Aquavit sherbet

Neither lemon nor sherbet belong to traditional Norwegian cuisine. The following combination proves, however, that aquavit is versatile and perfectly suited to exotic fruits and modern flavours.

5 dl (17 fl. oz.) water
250 g (10 fl. oz.) sugar
rind of one lemon
juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ – 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ dl (4 $\frac{1}{2}$ – 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ fl. oz.) Linie Aquavit
two egg-whites

Remove the lemon rind with a potato peeler. Boil sugar, water and the rind for about five minutes. Add the lemon juice, allow to cool and then strain. Add aquavit to the syrup according to taste, and freeze until it has the consistency of a sherbet. Stir from time to time during the freezing process. Beat the egg-whites until stiff and mix with the sherbet. Return to freezer until completely frozen. Serve in individual dishes and garnish with thin twists of lemon peel or toasted almonds.



THE LINIE MATURATION JOURNEY



SOME JOURNEYS CHANGE YOU FOREVER



The best way to enjoy Linie is to serve it at room temperature in a tulip shaped glass, in the same way as a connoisseur would enjoy a Cognac. In 2007 the renowned Austrian glass producer Riedel made a glass specifically designed for cask matured aquavit.