

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 17(6) of Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 1576/89

(2022/C 429/09)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 27 of Regulation (EU) 2019/787 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

MAIN SPECIFICATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL FILE

‘Grappa della Valle d’Aosta’ / ‘Grappa de la Vallée d’Aoste’

EU No: PGI-IT-02479 – 30 August 2018

1. Name

‘Grappa della Valle d’Aosta’ / ‘Grappa de la Vallée d’Aoste’

2. Category of spirit drink

Grape marc spirit (category No 6 of Regulation (EC) No 110/2008)

3. Description of the spirit drink

Physical, chemical and/or organoleptic characteristics

- Colourless, except in the case of addition of plants or caramel or of ageing in wooden containers.
- Transparent and crystalline, with olfactory and retronasal sensations ranging, in terms of aromatic features, from floral to fruity depending on the raw material used. On the palate it is warm, soft and enriched with spicy sensations for the aged products.
- It is not flavoured, except as provided for in the traditional methods which provide for the addition of honey, aromatic plants or parts thereof, and fruit or parts thereof.

Specific characteristics (compared to spirit drinks of the same category)

- ‘Grappa della Valle d’Aosta’ / ‘Grappa de la Vallée d’Aoste’ has an alcoholic strength of not less than 38 % by volume and a content in volatile substances other than ethyl and methyl alcohol equal to or exceeding 140 grams per hectolitre of 100 % vol. alcohol.
- With regard to white grappas, the most frequent aromatic sensations are those that are characteristic of the (mostly local) grape varieties of origin, which are manifested in floral/balsamic/fruity notes (such as jasmine, sage, peach, apricot, exotic fruits). In the case of matured grappas, the spicy sensations can be traced back to the spicy vegetal character of many traditional vine varieties, as well as to the woody essences used in barrels, and to the duration of the ageing itself.
- It has a sugar content not exceeding 20 grams per litre, expressed as invert sugar. This limit also includes the possible use of honey for flavouring purposes.- Where it has matured for at least 12 months, it may contain caramel.

4. Geographical area concerned

The entire territory of the Autonomous Region of Valle d’Aosta.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 130, 17.5.2019, p. 1.

5. Method for obtaining the spirit drink

'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' is obtained by the distillation, using only a batch still, of fermented or semi-fermented grape marc, directly by water vapour or with the addition of water to the still (bain-marie system). For production of the grappa, the use of natural liquid wine lees is allowed up to a maximum amount of 25 kg per 100 kg of grape marc employed. The raw materials are obtained exclusively from varieties authorised for cultivation in Valle d'Aosta. The raw materials must be in a very good state of preservation and be obtained from grapes produced and processed in the territory of the Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta. The quantity of alcohol obtained from the lees must not exceed 35 % of the total quantity of alcohol in the finished product. The natural liquid wine lees can be used by adding the lees to the grape marc before its distillation. These operations must be carried out at the same producing distillery. The distillation of the fermented or semi-fermented grape marc, using only a batch still, must take place at less than 86 % vol. The product obtained may be redistilled within this limit value. Compliance with the limits must be evidenced by the keeping of records in which the quantities of the marc and of the natural liquid wine lees sent for distillation are recorded each day.

In the preparation of 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste', honey, aromatic plants or parts thereof, as well as fruit or parts thereof, may be added in line with traditional methods of production. The aromatic plants or parts thereof used to flavour 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' are: *Glycyrrhiza glabra* L., *Ruta graveolens*, *Juniperus communis* L., *Juglans regia* L., *Artemisia umbelliformis* L., *Artemisia genipi* (Weber), *Artemisia glacialis* L., *Rubus idaeus* L., *Vaccinium myrtillus* L., *Sambucus nigra* L., *Achillea millefolium*, *Achillea moschata* (Wulfen), *Rosa canina* L., *Prunus persica* L., *Vanilla planifolia* J. e A., *Laurus nobilis* L., *Illicium verum* H., *Pinus cembra* L., *Thymus* L.

A maximum of 20 grams per litre of sugar may be added, expressed as invert sugar.

Caramel may be used as colouring for grappa that is aged for at least twelve months, in accordance with the applicable EU and national legislation.

'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' may be aged in barrels, vats and other wooden containers that are not varnished or coated, for a period of not less than 12 months as monitored by tax authorities, in facilities located in the region. The normal wood cleaning and preservation treatments are allowed.

'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' must be distilled within the territory of the Region.

6. Link with the geographical environment or origin

The raw materials must be obtained exclusively from grapes produced and processed in the territory of the Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta. The climatic conditions of the vineyards at high altitudes (as throughout the Alpine region, of which grappa has always been the emblematic distillate) favour the synthesis and accumulation of varietal aromas in the grape skins. The low temperatures of the harsh Alpine winter that follows the harvest prevent or reduce the risk of bacterial or fungal contamination on the stored grape marc. Ultimately, the limited quantity of raw material and the proximity between wine-making holdings and distillers make it possible to distil only fresh grape marc or grape marc with minimal storage. While this set of factors does limit production volumes, it can enhance the quality characteristics. The meticulous use of small batch distillation facilities allows for the correct extraction of the natural aromas characteristic of 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste', and is essential to obtain pure monovarietal distillates, which would not be possible with continuous industrial installations.

The production of 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste', traditionally carried out by direct distillation of the grape marc in small artisanal batch stills, is closely linked to the territory of origin. The production of 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' is consistent with the region's winegrowing vocation and with the wide variations in environmental conditions and varieties grown.

The most frequent aromatic sensations of the grappas are those that are characteristic of the (mostly local) grape varieties of origin, which are manifested in floral/balsamic/fruity notes (such as jasmine, sage, peach, apricot, exotic fruits). In the case of matured grappas, the spicy sensations can be traced back to the spicy vegetal character of many traditional vine varieties, as well as to the woody essences used in barrels, and to the duration of the ageing itself.

The wineries from which the fresh and fermented grape marc is obtained are situated close to the distilleries; as a result, the marc can be distilled quickly before it starts to deteriorate, thus allowing the organoleptic characteristics of the grapes to be preserved. This is essential for the extraction of the aromas and compounds that lend the 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' its organoleptic characteristics. The harsh Alpine winter also makes a major contribution to achieving this result.

The raw materials must be obtained exclusively from vine varieties authorised for cultivation in Valle d'Aosta, as provided by the product specification for 'Valle d'Aosta' DOC wines.

The origin of the raw materials must be traceable from the accompanying documents and the distillers' records.

In addition, the particularly restrictive requirements for grape marc (determined by national legislation) result in a greater wealth of compounds in the grape marc and, consequently, in the associated extraction and distillation products, with olfactory and retronasal sensations ranging, in terms of aromatic features, from floral to fruity depending on the raw material used. On the palate it is warm, soft and enriched with spicy sensations for the aged products.

The reputation of 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' has its roots in an ancient tradition of small-scale production of grappa. The first historical documents referencing the production of grappa in Valle d'Aosta date from 1843 when an English traveller named Arthur Thomas mentions the production of grappa in Valle d'Aosta. (P. Malvezzi, 1972, *'Viaggiatori inglesi in Valle d'Aosta'*). A number of later historical sources document the distillation of grape marc in the region, first distilled mainly by groups of artisanal winegrowers, but increasingly entrusted to local distilleries created in that period. In this context, mention should be made of an agricultural inquiry into the conditions of the agricultural class in 1878 (P. Careggio, 2004. *'L'inchiesta agraria sulle condizioni della classe agricola. 1885.'* Ed. Le Château), an 1887 manuscript on Valle d'Aosta agriculture (L. Argentier, 2004. *'Leçons sur l'agriculture valdôtaine.'* Ed. Le Château), a broad historical report included in the book *'Vini e distillati della Valle D'Aosta'* (Vola e Sanguinetti, 1971, ed. Musumeci), and finally a collection of interviews with winegrowers from the Valle d'Aosta (*'Vini, vigneti e vigneroni della Valle D'Aosta'*. P. Cossavella, 2012, Tipografia Valdostana). There are also numerous promotional records in the annals of the Valle d'Aosta farmers dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century (*'Almanach de l'agriculteur valdotain'*. 1911, Imprimerie Joseph Marguerettaz; *'Messager valdotain'* 1912 and 1931 editions. Imprimerie Catholique).

7. European Union or national/regional provisions

Decree of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy No 5396 of 27 November 2008 which, inter alia, sets more stringent requirements for the marc than those laid down by EU rules.

Special statute of the Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta.

8. Applicant

Name: Istituto Tutela Grappa della Valle d'Aosta.

Address: Zona Industriale 12, 11020 Saint-Marcel Aosta.

9. Supplement to the geographical indication and specific labelling rules

In addition to the Italian name 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta', the French name 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' may also be used, simultaneously or as an alternative, under Article 38 of the Special Statute of the Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta granting equal status to the French and Italian languages.

The designation 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' can be accompanied by a reference:

- (a) to the name of a single grape variety, if the grappa was distilled from raw materials deriving from the vinification of that grape variety: a tolerance threshold of other grape varieties, excluding all those not authorised for cultivation in Valle d'Aosta, is admitted up to 15 % by weight;

- (b) to the names of not more than two grape varieties, if the grappa was distilled from raw materials entirely deriving from the vinification of those grape varieties. The grape varieties must be stated on the label in decreasing order of weight. Grape varieties accounting for less than 15 % of total weight may not be indicated on the label;
- (c) to one of the seven geographical sub-areas of the product covered by the current product specification for wine with the Valle d'Aosta DOC, only if the raw materials come from the vinification of grapes that comply with the abovementioned specification, in the context of additional information for the consumer;
- (d) to the distillation method, exclusively batch-based, and to the type of still.

For those grappas that would be eligible to bear more than one of the references set out in points (a) and (b) above concomitantly, the name may be accompanied by only one of those references.

The name 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' must be accompanied by the reference to the name of any aromatic plants or parts thereof, and fruit or parts thereof, added in accordance with the traditional production methods set out in section (d) of this technical file.

If matured for a period of not less than 12 months in unvarnished and uncoated wooden barrels, vats or other wooden containers in ageing facilities for 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' that are monitored by the tax authorities, the words 'vecchia' (old) or 'invecchiata' (aged) may be used in its presentation and promotion. The words 'riserva' (reserve) or 'stravecchia' (extra aged) may be used for 'Grappa della Valle d'Aosta' / 'Grappa de la Vallée d'Aoste' aged for at least 18 months. The maturation period may be stated in years and months or solely in months.

Without prejudice to the above provisions on ageing, in order to provide accurate information to consumers, it is also possible to specify the type of wooden vessel used (e.g. barrique, tonneau, caratello, etc.), including through use of the respective adjectives, only if the grappa was stored in this type of container for at least half the minimum ageing time required for the class ('invecchiata', 'riserva').
