

European Excellence Arrives in Absinthe

Jenny Adams introduces us to two new imports from Switzerland and the Loire Valley



Nouvelle-Orléans is artisanally distilled in the historic Combiar distillery in France's Loire Valley.

With the modern absinthe revival in full swing, the U.S. market has been peppered with newcomers aiming to cash in on the craze. Rising above the background noise is the long awaited arrival of two absinthes of historical pedigree and worldwide acclaim, both of which had earned their market status well before absinthe became re-legalized in the U.S. after a 95 year hiatus.

La Clandestine Absinthe Supérieure

La Clandestine Absinthe Supérieure represents the handiwork of Claude-Alain Bugnon, and is widely regarded as the crème de la crème of absinthes, hailing from the very birthplace of absinthe, Couvet, Switzerland.

Initially a coveted bootleg item that was distilled surreptitiously in the hilly Val de Travers, La Clandestine earned its legitimacy following the formal repeal of the Swiss absinthe ban in 2005. A clear style of absinthe rooted in early twentieth-century tradition (known as *la bleue*), La Clandestine is entirely handcrafted and distilled in small batches, employing herbs cultivated from the foothills of the Swiss Alps. Captured inside each distinctive blue bottle is a dose of Swiss alpine springtime, delightfully refreshing from the first sip onward.

Viridian Spirits, SRP \$71.99 (53% ABV)

Nouvelle-Orléans Absinthe Supérieure

Nouvelle-Orléans Absinthe Supérieure emerged in 2004 following a long-awaited release and immediately earned a cult-like status amongst the absinthe cognoscenti. The handiwork of T. A. Breaux, nicknamed the “god-father of the absinthe renaissance,”



Nouvelle-Orléans is artisanally distilled in the historic Combiar distillery in France's Loire Valley and has been featured on the History Channel's popular *Modern Marvels* program.

A traditional pre-1900 French-style absinthe, Nouvelle-Orléans is the product of years of intense craftsmanship, and it represents a tribute to Breaux's own hometown and epicenter of absinthe culture, New Orleans. Nouvelle-Orléans is distilled in small batches using Combiar's original 130-year-old copper absinthe stills and contains artemisia (wormwood) grown in the original French fields. The light green tint of Nouvelle-Orléans belies a palate of powerful herbal and floral textures and a very long finish.

Viridian Spirits, SRP \$110 (68% ABV) ■■