

MARGERUM
AMARO



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How it's made: Doug Margerum's AMARO is wine fortified with barrel aged brandy, herbs (sage, thyme, marjoram, parsley, lemon verbena, rosemary and mint to name a few), bark, roots, dried orange peel and caramelized simple syrup.

The wine has been aged in barrique outdoors and in. The final result is 23% alcohol and 16% residual sugar. Forty individual ingredients make up the final blend.

Inspiration for the name: Amaro is Italian for "bitter" and wines in this digestive category are referred to as Amaro.

Inspiration for the image: Use a magnifying glass to look at the front image on the label. It is very cool. There is a two-faced winged man standing on a mezza luna, clutching a goblet of snakes with a skull tree and solitary bird by his side. What could be possibly more appropriate?

Uses: You can drink it neat (one or two oz.) after dinner as a digestive. I also love it as the bitter component for a Perfect Manhattan. One part sweet vermouth (or Carpano Antica is really good), one part dry vermouth (I like Dolin), two parts bourbon (although I've been making rye Manhattans and I like them better), a dash of Margerum Amaro, and a twist of lemon zest. This can be served up or on the rocks. Also used as the base for our Margerum Santa Manhattan. Three parts Margerum Marc of Santa Barbara, one part Margerum White Vermouth, one part Margerum Amaro, a splash of lemon juice and a twist of lemon - shake well and pour into a chilled (with ice and soda water) martini glass or serve on the rocks.

100 cases per year produced; \$50 per bottle.

Background: Amaro (plural is Amari) is an Italian herbal liqueur, commonly drunk as an after-dinner digestif. It is bitter and sweet, sometimes syrupy, usually with an alcohol content between 16% and 35%. Amari are produced by macerating herbs, roots, flowers and bark in brandy, mixing with sugar syrup, and allowing the mixture to age in casks or in bottle.

Commercially produced Amari may contain "natural flavorings" and caramel coloring. A typical Amaro is flavored with several (sometimes several dozen) herbs and roots. Amari are typically flavored with gentian, angelica, cinchona bark, lemon verbena (cedrina), juniper, anise, fennel, ginger, mint, thyme, sage, bay laurel, citrus peel, cardamom, wormwood (assenzio) and centaurea minor. Amari are typically drunk neat.