

MARGERUM WINE COMPANY

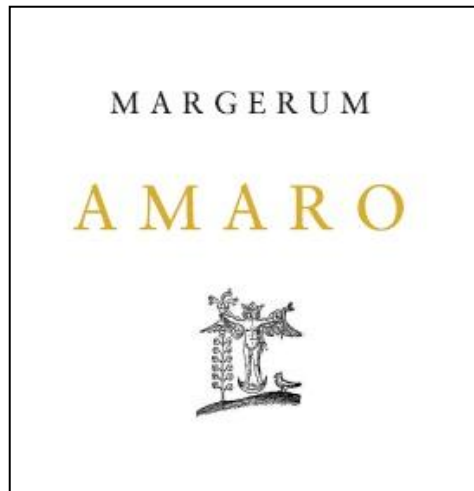


AMARO

House recipe fortified wine (grape neutral spirits) with herbs (sage, thyme, marjoram, parsley, lemon verbena, rosemary, and mint), barks, roots, dried orange peels, and caramelized simple syrup. Aged in cask outdoors. Final result is 23% alcohol. There are one hundred cases produced.

Doug's Notes:

Drink it neat (one or two oz.) after dinner as a digestive. I also love it as the bitter component for a Perfect Manhattan. 1 part sweet vermouth (or Carpano Antica is really good), 1 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. Use a magnifying glass to look at the front image on the label. It is very cool.



Background:

Amaro (meaning "bitter" in Italian, plural Amari) is a variety of Italian herbal liqueur, commonly drunk as an after-dinner digestif. It is usually bitter and sweet, sometimes syrupy, usually with an alcohol content between 16% and 35%. Amari are typically produced by macerating herbs, roots, flowers, bark, and/or citrus peels in alcohol, either neutral spirits or wine, mixing the filtrate with sugar syrup, and allowing the mixture to age in casks or in bottle.

Dozens of varieties are commercially produced, the most commonly available of which are Averna, Ramazzotti, Lucano, and Montenegro. Commercially produced Amari may contain "natural flavourings" and caramel coloring. A typical Amaro is flavoured with several (sometimes several dozen) herbs and roots. Some producers list the ingredients in some detail on the bottle label. Amari are typically flavored with some of the following: gentian, angelica, and cinchona (China), as well as lemon balm (melissa), Lemon verbena (cedrina), juniper, anise, fennel, zedoary, ginger, mint, thyme, sage, bay laurel, citrus peels, licorice, cinnamon, menthol, cardamom, saffron, rue (ruta), wormwood (assenzio), elder (sambuco), and centaurea minor.

Many commercial bottlers trace their recipe or production to the 19th century. Recipes often originated in monasteries or pharmacies.

Amari are typically drunk neat, with a citrus wedge, on ice, or with tonic water.

Amaro should not be confused with amaretto, another Italian liqueur that is sweet and flavored with almonds or the pits of drupe fruits such as apricots, nor with amarone, a rich Italian dry red wine from Valpolicella. Similar liqueurs have traditionally been produced throughout Europe, with local variations, notably in Germany, where they are called Kräuter Likör, as well as Hungary, Netherlands, France, etc. The term Amaro is typically only applied to such liqueurs which are produced in Italy.