



ALEMBIC STILLS

Our traditional alembic stills are all made from the finest copper, since this metal not only conducts heat better, which helps both the fermentation process and consequent distillation, but also improves the outcome of the final distillation in terms of flavour. Copper also reduces bacterial contamination (which is why it is also used for water pipes, as it helps to preserve the anti-bacterial quality of the water) and absorbs the sulphur produced during fermentation.

Copper has been used to make stills since ancient times, and as successive generations have found, it remains the best option, thanks to its properties and natural advantages in the distilling process.

Basic Rules for Distilling

Although our alembic stills may be used to distil various materials and substances, certain precautions should be taken when distilling, since if it is not done carefully, serious harm to health can result. If the user does not happen to have any knowledge about distilling, he/she must learn the correct way to do it. Many excellent books and discussion forums are available on this topic, or it is possible to learn the skills required from people already experienced in distillation processes.

In relation to distilling alcoholic drinks, the user must find out the law that applies in the country in question, since some countries impose restrictions on distilling for this purpose.

Sealing Technique

It is natural that, after a few years, your alembic still will develop some steam escape between the pot and the swan neck. When this happens, a simple sealing technique can be used to prevent the steam escaping. Make a mixture of water and rye flour, and apply this mass (mixture), to the places where the steam is escaping from.



Cleaning and Maintenance

Before using your still for the first time we recommend that you first distil some water to get rid of any impurities left from the manufacturing process. Once it has been used then, like any piece of machinery or tool, the still has to be kept clean, and it will last for years.

If you use the still just once a year you must make sure to clean it before putting it away until the next year's distillation. This is what happens in Spain and Portugal after the grape harvest. Cleaning will get rid of harmful substances that may accumulate and be deposited on the walls of the still, from the pot to the coil. A cleaning distillation can be done with a mixture of water and rye flour. It's quite easy: fill the still with water to 40% and rye flour to 5% of its capacity. Before carrying out the cleaning distillation, check that the swan neck and coil are not blocked.

If you use your still fairly frequently, i.e. several times a year, you won't need to clean it with the rye flour and water distillation. You will only need to clean it with a water distillation.

Regular use of copper causes it to oxidise, and so your alembic still will turn a deep red colour. You should polish the outside with an appropriate polisher which contains no harmful substances. Do not use abrasive substances. There are traditional methods, of course, that you can use to clean the pot: moisten a cloth in a solution of salt and lemon juice and rub this over the pot.

If you use the still to make essential oils, you must be very careful because these can stick to the walls of the pot and the tubes, and form a dangerous crust. All parts of the alembic still must then be cleaned with warm water to get rid of the grease, especially in the condensation tube; otherwise it will eventually become blocked.

Alembic Stills used to produce essential oils should never be used to distil alcoholic drinks, as the copper will naturally become impregnated with the oils and contaminate the drink, rendering it unfit for human consumption.