

Absinthe

A Brief Guide

Hello

- My name is Billy
- I am cowfish or meatrobot online
- I have a blog - <http://bbbblog.org.uk>
- My job is to write about drinks
- Yes, that is a real job

La coloration s'obtient avec les plantes suivantes :

Petite absinthe	0 k. 080
Hysope	0 k. 075
Mélisse	0 k. 025
Véronique	0 k. 040
Alcool à 85°	9 l. 5
Eau	5 l. »

Opérer comme plus haut :

Absinthe suisse blanche.

Grande absinthe mondée.	0 k. 275
Petite absinthe mondée	0 k. 112
Hysope fleurie	0 k. 110
Véronique.	0 k. 055
Génépi	0 k. 055
Camomille romaine	0 k. 025
Anis vert	0 k. 025
Fenouil de Florence	0 k. 525
Coriandre	0 k. 100
Semences d'angélique	0 k. 055
Alcool à 85°	9 l. 6

On fait macérer les plantes et on distille de la même manière que pour l'absinthe verte. Le bon produit est réduit à 74°.

Crème d'absinthe surfine

Feuilles et sommités fleuries de grande absinthe	25 gr.
Petite absinthe	6 gr.
Menthe poivrée (feuilles sèches).	6 gr.
Anis vert	6 gr.
Fenouil	25 gr.
Calamus aromaticus	15 gr.
Zestes de deux citrons.	

Faire macérer pendant 2 jours dans 4 litres d'alcool à 85°, ajouter 3 litres 50 d'eau, distiller et retirer 3 litres 80. Ajouter à froid un sirop préparé à chaud avec 5 kilogrammes 50 de sucre et 2 litres 50 d'eau. Compléter 10 litres avec de l'eau, trancher, colorer en vert et filtrer.

§ 2. — Absinthes par les essences

Absinthe ordinaire

Essence de grande absinthe	3 gr.
Essence de badiane	5 gr.
Essence d'anis	1 gr.
Essence de fenouil doux	1 gr.
Alcool à 90°	5 l. 100
Eau	4 l. 900

Dissoudre les essences dans l'alcool ; ajouter l'eau et colorer avec un vert végétal et du caramel. Laisser reposer quelque temps.

Produit 10 litres à 46°

Absinthe demi-fine

Essence de grande absinthe	3 gr.
Essence de petite absinthe.	4 gr.
Essence de menthe poivrée	0 gr. 5
Essence d'hysope	0 gr. 2
Essence d'angélique.	6 gr.
Essence d'anis	3 gr.
Essence de badiane	0 gr. 2
Essence de coriandre	0 gr. 2
Essence de fenouil doux	1 gr. 5
Alcool à 85°	6 l. 200
Eau	3 l. 800

Picture from De Brevans - Les Liqueurs Artificielles
<http://www.oxygenee.com/de-Brevans-French-Text.pdf>
<http://www.oxygenee.com/de-Brevans-English.pdf>

1. What is it?

Named for *Artimesia Absinthium*, Grand Wormwood

Neutral alcohol infused with herbs, especially wormwood, anise and fennel.

Similar to gin in manufacture, especially as there are two main methods of making.

1) Cold Compound: Maceration of botanicals in neutral spirit or the addition of flavourings to neutral spirit. The cheaper way of making absinthe (and gin) and generally inferior to 'traditionally' made spirits.

2) Distilled absinthe: Maceration followed by redistillation and optional further maceration that produces green colouring. ie. put the ingredients in some neutral spirit for a bit, redistill this liquid, then optionally add a 'tea bag' of further ingredients to give more flavour and colour.

Without the post-distillation maceration you get a clear 'blanche' absinthe. With you get a green 'verte' absinthe. Cold compound absinthes usually use green food colouring.

High alcohol content due to a) historical use as a diluted medicine b) to maintain stable colouration, as chlorophyll fades from green to brown over time below about 68%.

This is why many old bottles of absinthe from before than ban have gone 'feuilles mort' (dead leaf) brown - the alcohol has evaporated through the bottle seal, dropping the ABV below 68% and allowing the chlorophyll to denature. The flavour is usually still pretty good... (and the colour is quite beautiful).



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Artemisia_absinthium_0002.JPG

Wormwood used for various medicinal purposes since Egyptian times.
Modern Absinthe from late 1700s.



<http://www.eabsinthe.com/?p=156>

One story of creation is that it was formulated by Dr Pierre Ordinaire, an itinerant doctor, in 1792 as medicine, maybe from a recipe created by the Henriod sisters of Couvet, west Switzerland.

Another story is that Ordinaire created the recipe and sold it to the Henriod sisters.

First documented 'fact' is the sale of a recipe to Major Daniel-Henri Dubied and the opening of the first absinthe distillery in Pontarlier, France in 1797 - Dubied Pere et Fils. Dubied's partners were his son Marcellin and his son-in-law Henry-Louis Pernod.

PORTAHLIER - Ultra Pernod Filz, Maxwellle Construction

Barrel, Prout,



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pernod_1.jpg

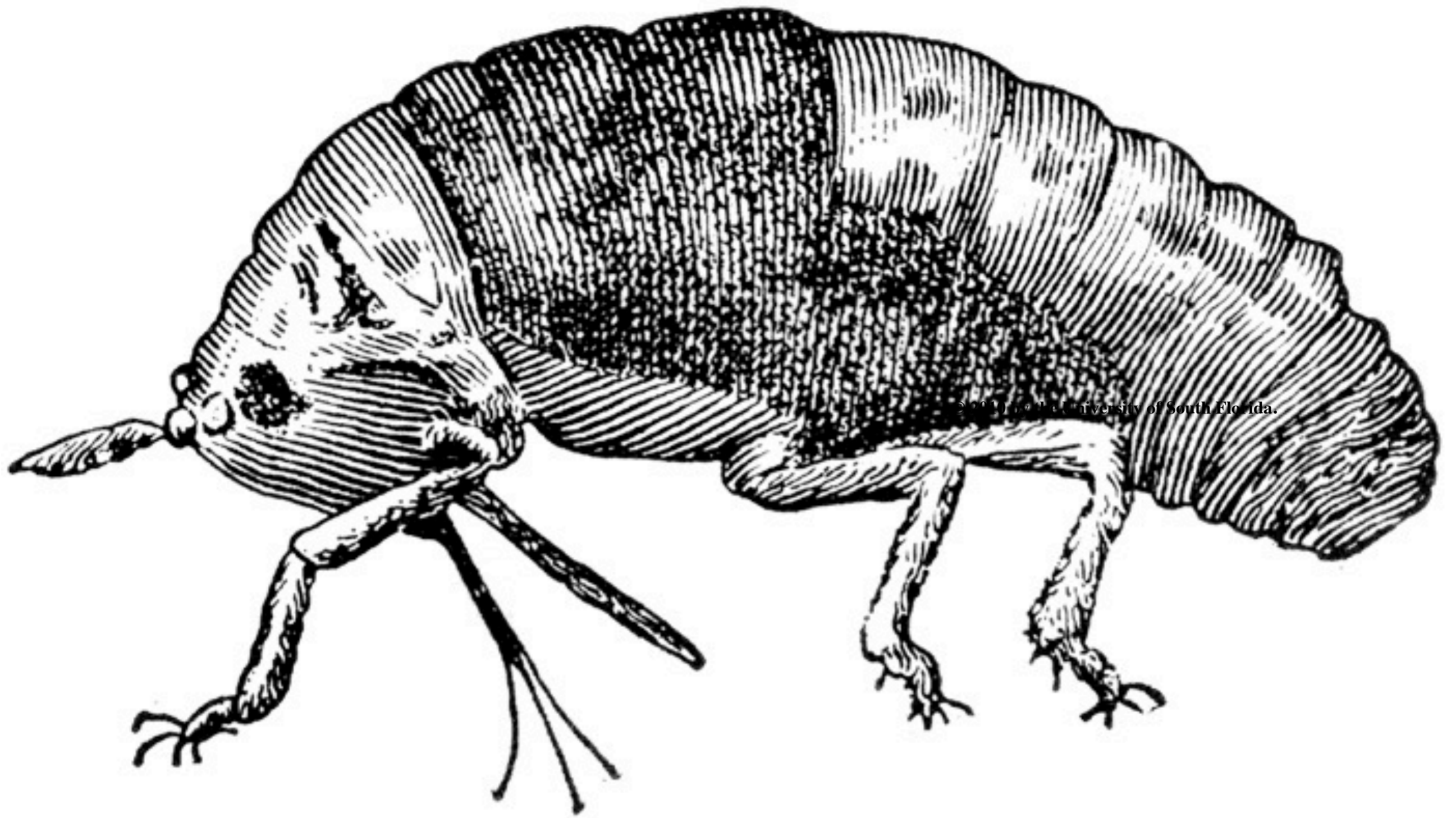
The company expanded to a second distillery due to popularity and changed their name to Maison Pernod Fils, the foundation of the drinks giant still known today.

Popularity through the 19th century grew because:

1) Algerian campaign 1830-1847. Soldiers' water canteens dosed with absinthe to guard against various illnesses. When the soldiers came home they had a taste for it...

2) Its adoption by the Bohemian movement over the century.

and 3) (please turn the page)



© 2010 by the University of South Florida. <http://etc.usf.edu/clipart/>

Phylloxera. Decimated grape crops, killing brandy and wine in continental Europe. Arrived from the USA in the 1860s with vine cuttings. Grape vines grafted with US specimens (which were partially resistant to phylloxera) through the end of the century, halting the spread of the bug.

This meant little/no wine or brandy, and also had issues as grape spirit was the base for many other drinks including absinthe.

They switched to sugar beet, which works great as a neutral alcohol and base for drinks, but great as a rum.



<http://thebookishredhead.blogspot.com/2007/11/kiss-of-green-fairy.html>

The Downfall of Absinthe.

Conspiracy theory: Temperance movement were surprisingly backed by the wine and brandy producers to help bring down the dominance of the absinthe industry as the grape harvests became viable again - they'd lost market share and needed it back, and anyways, it's not as if wine and brandy were really seen as 'drinking' in early 20th century France...

Lots of propaganda about the evils of Absinthe drinking were published by various anti-alcohol groups, eating away at the spirit's popularity.

Came to a head with Jean Lanfray 1905 - drank 2 glasses of absinthe at lunchtime, went home, killed his wife and daughters and then tried to kill himself. Caused a large public outcry which led to the banning of absinthe in Switzerland and contributed to its wider banning worldwide.

Lanfray actually consumed seven glasses of wine, six glasses of [cognac](#), one [coffee](#) laced with [brandy](#), two [crème de menthes](#), and two glasses of [absinthe](#) after eating a sandwich^[1]. He returned home drunk with his father, and drank another coffee with brandy. But it was seen as the absinthe's fault...

It was banned pretty much everywhere by the 1920s.



The St George Distillery Absinthe Distillery
<http://justinsomnia.org/2010/04/getting-my-cocktail-education/>

Illicit distillation continued post-ban, especially in Switzerland. One simple method of hiding absinthe was by avoiding the post distillation maceration, as a clear liquid was more difficult to detect on sight as absinthe. This became so common in Switzerland that often blanche absinthe is referred to as 'swiss', although not all Swiss absinthes are clear these days.

In the 1990s various countries started making absinthe again and it slowly has become accepted and unbanned, with France lifting their ban on selling in May 2011.

Outside of France (where distilling for export has been allowed since 2000) there has also been a resurgence amongst US distilling, including Lucid, designed by Ted Breaux (now owner of Jade) and the first absinthe to be legally distilled in the US since the ban.

Preparation

Traditionally all that is added is iced water and maybe some sugar.

Many devices to add water, simplest and most common being a fountain that dripped water into the glass or a dish with a hole in that was placed on top of the glass and filled with iced water.

To add sugar generally a lump was added to the water in the water delivery device or placed on a slotted spoon over the glass, with water dripped onto the sugar to dissolve it. The absinthe would then be stirred to get the last of the sugar from the spoon and mix it into the drink.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHtdpYwsM9A>

Some devices were more elaborate, including the Balancier.
I want one of these.

Common Misconceptions

There are many tales about absinthe. Many are right. Even more are wrong. Here are a couple.

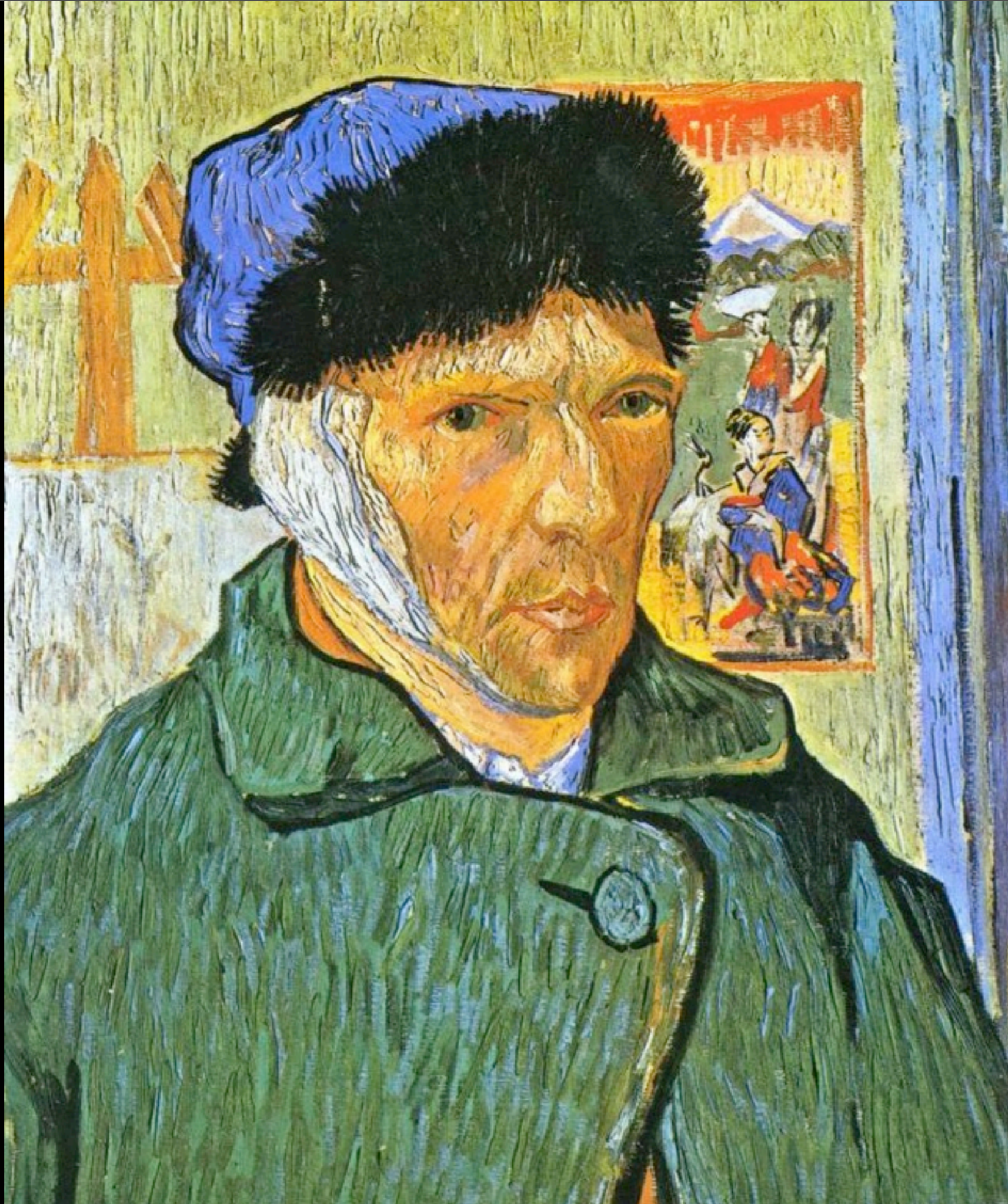


Isn't it traditional to burn it?

No.

There may have been traditions of burning absinthe in the past, but noone in the industry seems to know of any. When absinthe was reintroduced in the 1990s they needed a Signature Serve - flaming cocktails were all the rage, so they jumped on the band wagon. The burning of the sugar before throwing it into the absinthe will create caramel flavours which may compliment the drink, however traditional absinthes don't generally benefit.

It also leads to burning your eyebrows...



Doesn't absinthe make you hallucinate and want to chop off your ear?

No.

Thujone, the commonly identified active ingredient in wormwood, has a similar structure to THC but doesn't have psychotropic effects at the concentrations found in absinthes. There may be other active ingredients, and research continues, but mainly the guess is that any psychotropic effects are due to the drink's high alcoholic strength and that fact that when watered down it's alarmingly easy to drink...

