

The 3 things you absolutely need to know to recognize a REAL aged grappa.



La sesta delle sette cantine invecchiamento sotto sigillo (M.I.G) Nonino

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Barrique Aged Grappa, Aged Grappa, Grappa Riserva, the Italian distillate par excellence, is becoming more and more popular in its aged expression. But still today, many Grappa connoisseurs do not know how to distinguish true aging.

So, here are **the 3 things absolutely needed to know in order to recognize a REAL aged Grappa.**

1. **The rule "the Darker the color = the more aged the grappa" is fake!**



Certainly, the golden color distinguishes aged Grappa at first sight. However, **the intensity of the color of grappa has no correlation with the length of the aging period.** The size of the barrique, the fact it is a new one or an old one, the type of wood, are all conditions which influence the natural color transfer of wood to the distillate.

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When talking about Grappa that has been aged, it is important to remember that **the law allows the color of Grappa to be modified even artificially.**

In fact, it is allowed to add up to 2% of caramel in Grappa aged at least 12 months, without having to declare it in the label. The addition of caramel will not only darken the natural color of aging, but it will also modify the organoleptic profile of Grappa, adding sweetness and smoothness to the distillate.



The distiller who does not add caramel, in order to distinguish their Grappa, **can declare in the label 0% colorants**, in order to prove the color of his or her aged Grappa is given exclusively by the slow passing of time in barrique.

2. It is not written "Invecchiata" or "Riserva" on the label? Better be suspicious!



In order to protect the consumer, the law has identified terms which, if present on the label, guarantee a minimum aging time.

These recognized terms are:

- **Grappa Invecchiata or Grappa Vecchia (in Italian Invecchiata and Vecchia means "Aged")**, which guarantee an aging time of at least 12 months in aging cellars under seal (M.I.G.);

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- **Grappa Riserva or Grappa Stravecchia** (in Italian means “Reserve”), which guarantee an aging time of at least 18 months in cellars aged under seal (M.I.G.).

If these legally binding terms are not present in the label, therefore, it is fair to assume the aging of the distillate is not even 12 months.

The terms "Maturata", "Affinata", "Elevata" instead, are forbidden and cannot be used in labeling and in the sales denomination of grappa because they mislead the consumer.

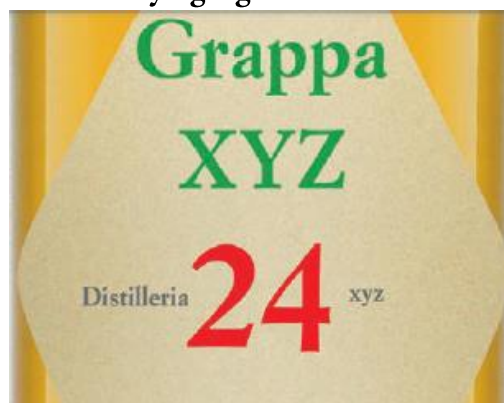
3. Numbers in the label? Attention, they do not always indicate the aging.

The law allows the indication of the aging time in the label, but only if expressed in months or years. The numbers on the label which are not followed by the words months or years, have no value for aging. They are considered to be the name of Grappa, fantasy names to distinguish the product.

Let's test ourselves, only one of these labels guarantees an aging period of 24 years. Could you recognize which one?



The first label does not guarantee any aging



Let's start by zooming in on the first bottle on the left. In the center of the label it is written "24". **But 24 what? There is no specification of time expressed in months or in years**, number 24 is just the Grappa name, it does not have any meaning about aging. This label does not guarantee any aging.

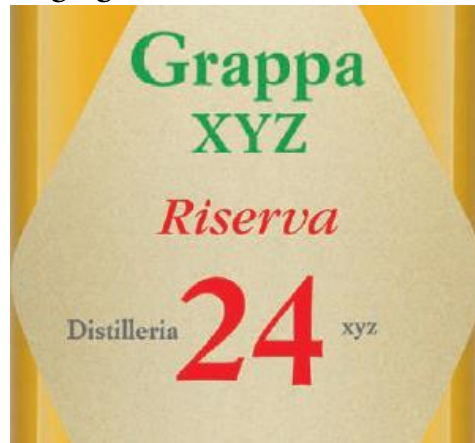
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The second label guarantees an aging of at least 12 months



Even in the second bottle there is the same problem: **the specification of time expressed in months or in years after number 24 is missing.** Also in this case number 24 is just the Grappa name. However, differently from the first label, **the term "Invecchiata" (aka Aged) is present.** **Therefore there is a guarantee of aging of at least 12 months.**

The third label guarantees an aging of at least 18 months



Even in the third bottle there is the same problem: there is no specification of time expressed in months or years after number 24. Also in this case **number 24 is just the Grappa name.** However, the fact that **the term Riserva is present, guarantees an aging of at least 18 months.**

The fourth label does not guarantee any kind of aging

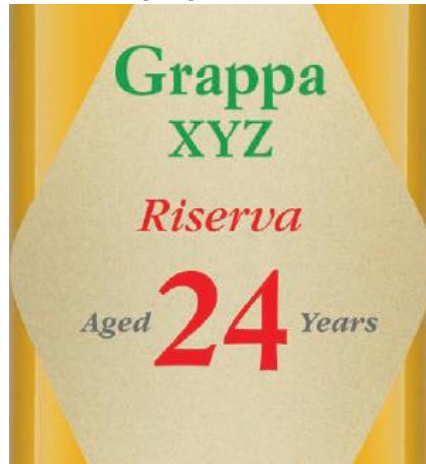


The fourth label uses an elaborated contrivance. The fact grappa is the result of the distillation of pomace from the vintage of 1996 and that it was bottled in 2020, does not guarantee any aging.

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Nowhere is it written that in these years it was aged or for how long. From 1996 to 2019, the grappa could very well have been kept in stainless steel containers.

The fifth label guarantees 24 years of aging



Finally, we have the label that guarantees aging! Besides the term Riserva, which guarantees an aging of at least 18 months, we have number 24 followed by the specification of time expressed in years. Therefore this grappa must have been aged for at least 24 years.

Reading the label is the only way to be sure about what you are buying!

The label of Grappa does not have only a promotional or attractive function, it is the most important part of the bottle. The producer is required to comply with a complex set of regulations which establish the mandatory and optional information that must or can appear on the label of the product on sale.

Declaring false in a label is fraud! For this reason **the label of Grappa is the most reliable source of information about the product.** If information is written only on a social post or on the website but it is not also written on the label of the product, it cannot be trusted.

An example of misleading social communication: in the description of the post it is said 24 years of aging, however on the label of the bottle there is only the number 24 without any specification!



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Knowing how to recognize the quality and characteristics of the product you want to buy is essential for a conscious consumption and to defend the quality of the Made in Italy in the world.

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I love Grappa. Grappa is the Italian story of six generations of my family and it is the ambassador par excellence of the Made in Italy in the world. But for it to continue to be so, it is necessary for everyone to know how to distinguish the quality of the product he/she is buying. For this reason, my goal for 2021 is to make the transparency of the label of Grappa become social. The goal is still a long way off, but today I feel like I've taken the first small step. Enjoy reading

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