

Eau de Vie

a wine, spirits, and travel newsletter

Vol. 10 October 2019

Learning a Language

Traveling to a foreign country often means struggling to communicate. This can make you feel uncomfortable and dumb.

Why would anyone willingly do something that makes them feel uncomfortable and dumb? Because traveling allows you to see our world in a completely new way. Any you don't need to speak the language to enjoy this new place.

While you don't need to speak the language to travel you should know a few key phrases. What did your parents teach you to say? Please and thank you. If you learn no other words, these two are essential. Plus, you might want to add: hello, goodbye and 1,2,3,4,5.

That's it. You've earned the language. Everything else can be done with hand signals, smiles, shoulder shrugs and a confidence that wherever you go someone will come to your aid. I've seen it more times than I can count, someone will help you figure it out. Don't worry, the world is full of nice, kind people. They will help you.

If you want to learn more than just the basic: hello, please, thank you, goodbye and 1,2,3,4,5 there are lots of options around.

We've tried apps like Babble and Duo Lingo, paid programs like Rosetta Stone, Berlitz, Community Education classes, and checked out numerous books from the library.

Sara and I have an off and on relationship with trying to learn more French that spans many years. Each time we travel to France I learn a little more but I still struggle with ordering a taxi on the phone.

For us the best language learning course has been the *Michel Thomas Method*. We first tried it by checking out the tapes from the Duluth Public Library.

The tapes have been digitized and the lessons are now available as an app. Michel Thomas offers languages in French, Spanish, German and Italian.

We've formed a small weekly French learning club with Lynnea and we listen to the app and study along, testing our French in turn. Our progress is slow but we are learning and our French proficiency is growing.

Our French club is open to anyone that wishes to join. We meet every Tuesday at 3pm. À bientôt!

Vermouth & Artemisia

Vermouth is a wine that has been aromatized with the herb *artemisia* and any other herb, fruit, spice or flavoring. The word vermouth is derived from the German word for *artemisia*, *vermut*. In English we call *artemisia*, *wormwood*.

The type of wine used in vermouth is mostly white. Red vermouth is colored by the addition of botanicals in the production process. The type of grape varies with the region. In the south of France they use the Picpoul grape. Vermouth is generally fortified with spirits to stabilize the product.

Vermouth was originally consumed straight or with tonic and served as an aperitif to stimulate digestion. Now we mostly consume vermouth as a mixer in a cocktail. Classic cocktails that include vermouth are the Martini and the Manhattan.

Vermouth is wine based and will degrade when exposed to oxygen. Oxidation will strip vermouth of its key characteristic - aromatics. Thus many vermouths are considered to be dull and flat simply because they have been open for too long. A newly opened bottle of vermouth will keep fresh for about two weeks in the refrigerator.



Liqueurs 1

~ October 12th ~

[12 spots still available](#)

We will be sampling:

Lillet, Pommeau de Normandie,
St. George Spiced Pear,
St. Germain, Clossterbitter and
Chartreuse.

Practical Information:

Class starts @ 7:30pm ~ **sharp**
@ 2620 E. Superior Street.

Cost is \$15/pp.

Class size is limited to 20.

Light *hor d'oeuvres* after tasting.

R.S.V.P. required.

November 9th ~ Liqueurs 2

Last class of the year. We will be
tasting bean, nut, seed, cream and
whiskey liqueurs.

Liqueurs vs Cordials

You've probably heard both terms:
Liqueurs and Cordials. But what is
the difference?

In the United States both terms
are used interchangeably and are
defined as: products obtained by
mixing spirits with fruit, flowers,
plants, juices, extracts or other
natural flavorings.

In the European Union a cordial
is not synonymous with the term
liqueur. A cordial is a nonalcoholic
flavor-enhancing ingredient used in
beverages.

A brief History of Liqueurs

The French word liqueur is derived
from the Latin *liquifacere*, which
means to dissolve.

In the United States and Canada
we use the term liquor to denote
any alcoholic spirit. But this can
create some confusion because
in the UK and Europe the term
liquor doesn't exist. They use the
word liqueur which means, in every
language in the EU, a sweetened
spirit.

The European Union also
categorizes liqueurs as "Creme"
(as in Creme de Cacao or Creme
de Cassis), Sambuca (star anise),
Maraschino (colorless cherry
flavored), Nocino (walnuts), and
Advocaat (egg, sugar and honey).

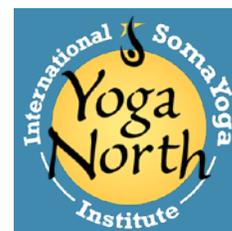
Liqueurs throughout history
have also been known as balms,
cremes, elixirs and oils. Originally
liqueurs were made as medicinal
remedies, love potions and general
cure-alls. Often these concoctions
were produced in monasteries
where monks and healers could
experiment with different
botanicals to create medicines they
deemed beneficial for any malady.

During the early 1500's the Swiss
doctor Paracelsus proposed the
idea that bloodletting and using
a poultice consisting of cow dung
and feathers on open wounds
didn't actually help heal the patient.
He was much more interested in
external and ingestible treatments
with botanicals such as wormwood
and camphor. His studies gave

rise to modern chemistry and gave
birth to clinical diagnosis and the
administration of highly specific
medicines.

It was in this Paracelsian tradition
that some of the early liqueurs
were first produced. Eventually the
conceptual health benefits of these
spirits waned and people embraced
the simple benefit of a tasty tipple.

During the 18th and 19th centuries
Italy and France produced many of
the world's most famous liqueurs.
We will be tasting some of these
in the upcoming classes. No blood
letting required.



Good news: Sara
is teaching again
at [Yoga North](#).

She is offering a
1x monthly Yin
Immersion class

on Friday nights (look under the
"workshops" tab on Yoga North's
class scheduling software). She's
also subbing regular classes at
Yoga North as needed so watch for
her to pop up on occasion. And
of course she'll be offering Yoga
Relaxation as part of our France
trips.



**Our Fall 2020
France canal boat
cruises are all
booked!**

**We will be offering details about
our Fall 2021 trips in July 2020.**

**If you enjoy this newsletter please
consider sharing it or inviting
others to a spirits tasting class.
If you aren't already subscribed, but
would like to, send an email to
david@savvynomad.com.**