

Bailoni

Gold Apricot Liqueur & Schnapps

Oh, those mineral-driven white wines of Austria's Wachau, that storybook landscape which stretches along the Danube River between the cities of Melk and Krems. Among the valley's historic and architecturally important monasteries, castles, and ruins grow those Grüner Veltliner grapevines on the granite and schist slopes.

This riverine scene, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its quintessential cultural landscape, doesn't only produce trademark wines. The

valley also grows an apricot like no other, called *Wachauer Marille*, or Wachauer Apricot. The fruit received protected designation in 1996. The same terrior that produces the distinctive Grüner Veltliner creates the special features of the Wachauer Apricot.

"In summer," explained Claudia Bailoni, who produces Bailoni Gold Apricot Liqueur, "we have very hot days and very cold nights. This climate provides the best conditions so that the unique aroma of the Wachauer Apricot can develop."

FOODIES WEST
Where else?





The Wachau, Bailoni informed, has approximately 100,000 apricot trees farmed by 180 growers. The silty soil on which the trees grow, called loess, imparts the ultra-sweet and -juicy character of the fruit and the intensely deep apricot flavor.

Right about now, all 100,000 trees open their blossoms, an event that can rival cherry blossom time in D.C. or Japan. The fruit, which matures by mid-July to mid-August, is packed with pectin, acid and sugar. Hand-selected apricots get destoned, pressed and processed into apricot juice. This provides the base for Bailoni's liqueur.

Specialty products importer, Erich Preiss, shared the Wachau wonder with the rest of the world more than 35 years ago. His son, Henry Preiss, has included the product his late father introduced in his current company's catalogue, HPS Epicurean.

"Back in the 70's when we had Bailoni," Henry Preiss recalled how unique the product was to the U.S., "it was mostly consumed at German Clubs and German or Austrian oriented restaurants."

So popular were the Bailoni Wachauer Marille products, they received the Austrian National Coat of Arms Award in 1977. The award not only confirmed the quality of their products, but also signified the company as well-respected.

Companies that receive the award, Bailoni added, have shown re-



markable performance for the Austrian economy.

What makes Bailoni so good?

“We lay very strong emphasis on tradition and innovation,” Bailoni said. “Our apricot liqueur recipe has been handed down from generation to generation. We only use apricots from our region and provide a 100-percent organic product. The orange-brownish color comes solely from the apricot fruit juice, which is used for the liqueur production.”

Bailoni also produces Bailoni Gold Apricot Schnapps. The schnapps tastes more like a brandy than a sweet liqueur.

“In Austria,” Bailoni said, “it’s common to call the clear fruit brandy or Eau de Vie a schnapps. In the case of Bailoni, the Schnapps is not sweet. It is an 80 proof spirit that brings out the fine nuances of the apricot fruit. The other product is a liqueur, which has apricot juice and sugar as well as alcohol in it. This product is sweet and orange versus clear in color.”

Preiss recommended using either product in cocktails and straight up or over fruit salads and in dessert recipes.



FOODIES WEST
Where else?