



ROUND OFF THE DAY WITH CLAPP'S FAVORITE

On the northern edge of the city in the quiet soburb of Klotzsche, an old manor leans up against the old vineyard. Figs and pomegranates grow here. A young man shreds apples by the bosload – white desert apples, as Georg Schenk tells us later. In the historic vaulted cellar that dates back to 1802, the 58-year-old introduces us to the star of his distillery – "hig Bertha". Her name belies the fact that she is the most modern pot still in Europe. Between July and October, she works overtime. After the ripe fruit has been picked off the trees with long poles, once it has been hand sorted and cut, shredded and crushed into mash, when the fruit pulp with a little yeast has fermented a few weeks more, then this masterpiece of copper and chrome takes over.

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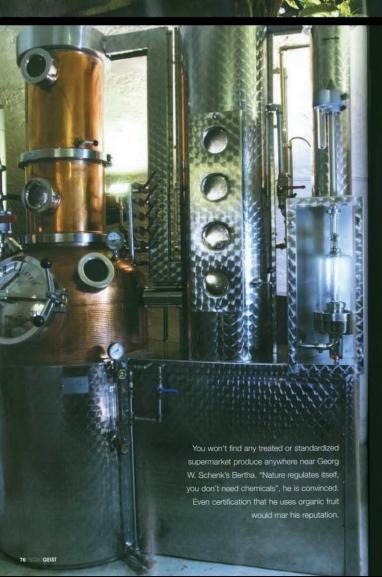
Georg W. Schenk came to Germany on business in the mid nineties, but it was his love of spritts that kept him here. Distilling was just a hobby before the former building contractor turned it into his profession in 2001. "Every ten years I have to do something new, otherwise I get bored," laughs Schenk. Originally a whisky lover, here he discovered a taste for finit brandy. He found it had a more differentiated taste and yet at some point he wanted more. It must be possible to achieve greater pleasure and higher guality, he thought. In 1996 at the delicatessen trade fair in Turin, Salone del Gusto, he first encountered the Slow Food movement. Over 80,000 people worldwide are today committed to the pleasure of enting and dirinking seasonal and regional produce. For Schenk, this meant saving local fruit varieties from extinction by fermenting and distilling them to produce eanst die vie of the believe world.

Many of the 71 different types of fruit that are transformed into exquisite brandles here are unique to the region. The Bohemiun Rose was thought to be extinct for 40 years before Schenk discovered it in a field. The Champagne Reinette and the Lasatian clove apple are also extremely rare. Big Bertha crushes the choice fruit mush and turns up the heat to 95 degrees Celsius. The rising alcoholic vapours and fruit aromas are then cooled down to liquid form. The raw distillate with an alcohol content of 85 percent is stored in chrome steel casks where it is kept for one to three years to enable the aromas to develop—something than not every distiller takes the time to do. Finally, spring water from the Ore Mountains is added to bring down the highly concentrated brandy to a drinklable alcohol level of 40 percent.

Schenk has mastered the art of creating fine fruit brandies. Over 70 international awards are fined up on his martlepliese — proof that he has the nose for the job. In his very first year he won second place in a rasting held by the Württenberg Distillery Association, and in 2007 he was awarded the World Spirits Award for the world's best plum brands. Schenk and his wife have since been joined by a distiller and two apprentices who help them produce their pure fruit brandies. At harvest time, local helpers lend a hand. Schenk takes his specialities around eight cultinary trade fairs every year. The distillery also has its own rasting room where visitors can sample the intosticating scents and aromas of his exquisite caux de vie. Chapp's Favorite, a species of pear grown by Thakdaus Clarp in Massochuserts, is also Schench's Kuscunite fif he is given the choice. Or the Zuccalmandio's Reinette, an apple variety created in the



GEIST 75



NOTHING BUT THE BEST IN THE PUTIN CASE

The shelves in the tasting room also bear a perfume – an edible one made of pure nature. Devised by the best distillers in the world, "Parfum de Vie" is an essence of plum, quince or pear with an alcohol content of 71 percent. It is sprayed over meat dishes and desserts at the fines treaturants. "No chef should be without it", says Schenk. "They just have to have Parfum de Vie". Of course he is convinced about the quality of his products; nevertheless Schenk was taken by surprise when a government representative appeared in his distillery one day with the mission to find a suitable present for the Russian President Putin. He took Schenk's exquisite frait brandy with him back to Berlin, and shortly afterwards ordered more as well as a larger case. So Schenk created the "Putin Case" with space for three bottles of brandy and two glasses. Now he always has five of these pre-packed just in case a distinguage that the state of the presence of the presence of the second of the presence of these pre-packed just in case a distinguage that the presence of the pre

driver comes by.

In 2011, it will be time for the distiller to embark on a new project. He has already started thinking about what to do once the distillery is standing on its own feet. Such as renovating one of the traditional farmsteads with a U-shaped contrant that are typical to the region and growing fruit and vegetables. Betirement doesn't figure into his plans. Neither does he want to go back to Switzerland. "Dresden has become my second home", says the bon-vivant from Switzerland who more than confirms the click of his fellow countryme.

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"We don't have any rivals because no-one makes what we do."