

Review: Killepitsch Krauterlikor Herbal Liqueur

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Dating from 1858, this unique herbal liqueur was developed by the Busch family in Dusseldorf, Germany. Formally launched as a commercial brand in the 1950s, the name was derived during World War II, by “Willi Busch, who, while in an air-raid shelter during the Second World War, promised to toast new beginnings with his friend Hans Müller-Schlösser if they survived. The message to his friend was, ‘If they don’t “KILL” us now, we will have a chance to “PITSCH” (local vernacular for drink), creating the name ‘Killepitsch.’”

Made from a recipe that includes 90 different herbs, spices, fruits and berries that have matured together for over a year, this deep brownish-red liqueur was recently reissued in a “Design” bottle (pictured below), though the formula inside is the same as the bottle with classic white label, red lettering, and gold trim.

Unctuous and bittersweet in the Jagermeister milieu, this complex spirit offers an overwhelming host of flavors. Lots of cinnamon, cloves, and root-beer flavor up front, then ultrasweet dark prune and raisin come along shortly after. In the finish, the bitterness becomes increasingly apparent, and a certain nuttiness joins the fray. A slightly harsh conclusion recalls dark cherries, rhubarb, and a touch of Christmas spice.

84 proof.

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