



The Danish Soldiers Club

April 2021

www.danishsoldiersclub.com

NEWSLETTER FOR THE DANISH SOLDIERS CLUB OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, INC. POST OFFICE BOX 41, PETALUMA CA. 94953
MEMBER OF DANSKE SOLDATERFORENINGERS LANDSRÅD. PROTECTOR HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARGRETHE II OF DENMARK

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As Sonoma County now moves into the COVID Orange Tier and many people have completed their vaccinations we hope you will join us again on May 1st, for a picnic at Kastania Field. We had about 32 people last month and enjoyed a delightful day in the eventual sunshine. Members do not need to RSVP, but you will have to bring your own food, beverages and tableware.

There is plenty of space to provide appropriate social distancing. No indoor activities are planned at this time. We look forward to seeing you then.

Keith Brians
President



"It keeps me from looking at my phone every two seconds."

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The Danish Soldiers Club
Post Office Box 41
Petaluma, CA 94953



Spring is in the air!

Address Correction Requested

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Club News

As Sonoma County moves into the COVID Orange Tier and with more people having completed their vaccinations we hope you will please join us again on Saturday May 1st, for a "bring your own picnic lunch" at Kastania Field.

Members do not need to RSVP, but you will have to bring your own food, beverages and tableware.

There is plenty of space to provide appropriate social distancing. In compliance with regional Covid guidelines, indoor activities are not planned at this time and the bar will remain closed.

32 people attended the picnic on April 3rd. We enjoyed a delightful day that started a little chilly with cloud cover but ended up being comfortable in the

sun. Most of those attending had been vaccinated and enjoyed the company of people they had not seen for awhile, many probably not since the 2019 Christmas Party.

With more people getting vaccinated and restrictions starting to ease hopefully more members will start attending. Eventually we can get to the point where we get can hopefully resume the catering service (we need a minimum of 40 orders), resume bar service and hold our club meetings. Fingers crossed for this summer.

In the meantime those that have attended seem to be enjoying the "bring your own picnic" lunches. If you have not tried it yet, think about joining us in May.

Reminder: Elections for 2021 Board

Due to the COVID 19 situation the Board decided in 2020 to delay the election of a new board until the early 2021 schedule, that election is still on hold. We have three board members with expired terms; Keith Brians, Margrethe Bækgaard and Ken Fultz. As always, this is a volunteer run organization and your participation in the board and other activities is appreciated and necessary for the club's success. So this is the time for Members to consider (especially new members) joining the board to help continue to keep this club strong and vibrant.

If you are interested please contact one of the Board Members to state your interest.

Dues for 2021

If you have not already done so it is time to renew your membership with the Danish Soldiers Club. The price is \$40 for 2021. The easiest way is Via **PayPal** on our website www.danishsoldiersclub.com.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP (DUE IN JANUARY)

Add to Cart

Just click on the member renewal button on top of the home page, and you are done.

If you do not have computer access you can also send a \$40 check to :

Margrethe Bækgaard our Treasurer. Her address is:

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Email: margrethebaekgaard@danishsoldiersclub.com

Important Notice for the April Luncheon and Meeting and COVID-19

Saturday, May 1st will again be a "Bring your own food and beverages" picnic, no reservations necessary.

To comply with the County guidance's the following requirements would be in place.

- *All buildings except restrooms would be closed.*
- *Members would provide their own lunch and beverages. and the bar would be closed.*
- *Groups of ten or fewer could sit together.*
- *Picnic tables would be spaced such that greater than six feet of space separate them.*
- *Face coverings would be required except when sitting at the table with your group.*

What is Aquavit? A Guide to the Scandinavian Spirit

Have you ever found yourself at a Scandinavian event, staring down a shot glass, and asking yourself "What is aquavit and why does it taste like this?" You are not alone.

I found online a helpful guide to aquavit in each Nordic country, including the history of aquavit, how it is made, and how to drink it:

What is Aquavit?

If the Nordic countries had a single, signature drink it would undoubtedly be the spirit aquavit. Aquavit comes from the Latin *aqua vitae*, or "water of life," which is kind of ironic since it tastes like liquid fire.

German traders brought aquavit to Scandinavia in the 1400s, where it was initially used in medicine and gunpowder. Pretty quickly though, the Scandinavians acquired a taste for the stuff, and aquavit became integrated into Nordic customs, traditions, and culture. So, what is aquavit?

Essentially, it is a vodka-like spirit. By EU decree, aquavit must be distilled with caraway or dill and should have a minimum alcohol by volume of 37.5%, though 40% is usually the average. Whether the aquavit started with potato or grain depends on the country, as does color, flavor, and how it is consumed. *Skål!*

Danish Aquavit

In Denmark, Danish aquavit is known as snaps – though, technically, not all snaps are aquavit. Snaps have been a part of the Danish diet for hundreds of years, so when King Christian III decided to tax it, Danes countered and began distilling their own aquavit at home.

In the 1800s Denmark was estimated to have 2,500 legal distilleries and countless more were home brewing "off the books." Today, the production of the Danish aquavit has largely been consolidated but a handful of artisanal distillers have popped up in recent years.

What makes Danish snaps different from some of its Nordic neighbors is that it is usually made from grain and has a light, if not clear, color.

HOW DANES DRINK SNAPS?

Cold and usually with a traditional smørrebrød lunch of Rugbrød, pickled herring, salmon, cheeses, etc. In Denmark, snaps are served as a shot. You'll also find that Danish snaps always makes an appearance for Easter and Christmas lunches, anniversaries, birthdays, and other special occasions.

Fun Danish aquavit fact: Snaps and beer go together like bread and butter. Danes typically drink them together. It is called a *sæt*.

DANISH SNAPS BRANDS TO TRY

AALBORG AKVAVIT - The Granddaddy of Danish snaps, Aalborg's table aquavit is arguably the best-known snaps in Denmark. You can even make your own infused spirit with their Aalborg



Basis Snaps. It is a neutral grain aquavit, and it is perfect for steeping your favorite fruits and herbs at home. Sad fact is that it is now produced in Norway but retains its Danish characteristics.

COPENHAGEN DISTILLERY - An award-winning dill aquavit that reimagines the classic Danish spirit. It is also flavored with green anise and lemon for a sharp and spicy taste. They also have a special edition Mulberry Rose.

Norwegian Aquavit: Akevitt

Unlike the aquavit found in other parts of Scandinavia, Norwegians mostly distill theirs with potatoes as a base. By law, 95% of the potatoes in Norwegian akevitt must come from Norway and, depending on the classification type, must be aged in barrels for at least six or 12 months.

Linie is the most famous brand of Norwegian akevitt and for good reason, its backstory is quite amazing. Linie akevitt matures in oak casks stored in the hull of a ship that crosses the equator not once but twice! This idea of aging the spirit at sea goes back to 1805 when Catharina Meinke Lysholm sent some potato liquor to sell in Indonesia. No one bought the barrels and when the ship returned two years later the Lysholm family discovered that the liquor had changed. They spent the next two decades perfecting the maturation technique and the robust Linie akevitt was born.

HOW NORWEGIANS DRINK SNAPS?

Norwegian "line aquavits," those that cross the equator, are sipped like a glass of cognac or whiskey at room temperature or slightly below. Akevitt is a must-have for Easter, Christmas, and Norway's Constitution Day to counterbalance the traditional pungent cheeses and pickled or fermented fishes. Norwegians also have their own aquavit-inspired cocktail. It is called a *fjellbekk* or "mountain stream" and is made with aquavit, vodka, lemon, and lime.

Fun Norwegian snaps fact: Christopher Hammer is considered to be the father of Norwegian akevitt for his books on how to store potatoes and distill the spirit from their mash. Ironically, Farmer Hammer was a self-proclaimed *avholdsmann*, or "abstainer," meaning that he did not drink alcohol.

NORWEGIAN AKEVITT BRANDS TO TRY

LINIE - The Norwegian "line aquavit." Linie's amber akevitt is matured over a four-month journey from Oslo to Sydney and back.

OSLO HÅNTVERKS DISTILLERY - OHD is a craft distiller in the heart of Oslo. Their collection of akevitt is fresh, fun, and with foraged Norwegian botanicals.



Icelandic Aquavit: Brennivín

Brennivín is the Icelandic version of aquavit. You may have heard of it before. It has been dubbed the "Black Death." The spirit earned its nickname in the 1930s dur-

ing prohibition when a partial repeal allowed Icelanders to drink hard spirits, wine, and weak beer. However, to discourage the populous from indulging in drink, the government put an ominous black label on the bottle. It had the opposite effect and brennivín became an Icelandic hit. It has become the island's beloved national liquor.

Unlike other Nordic aquavits, caraway and cumin dominate Icelandic brennivín which, similar to Norwegian akvitt, is also distilled from potatoes. Many owe brennivín's subtle sweetness to Iceland's pure, soft water. It contains no added sugar or anise, even if your taste buds say otherwise.



HOW ICELANDERS DRINK BRENNIVÍN?

Neat or as a substitute for gin, rum, or whiskey in a cocktail. Brennivín is also a celebratory shot and the (unofficial) drink of Þorrablót – the Icelandic mid-winter festival.

Fun Icelandic aquavit fact: Hákarl, Iceland's infamous dish of fermented shark, is washed down with a shot of brennivín. Imagine chasing slightly putrid shark with a glass of burning liquid...

ICELANDIC BRENNIVÍN BRANDS TO TRY

BRENNIVÍN - Branded as the "Original Icelandic Spirit," Ólgerðin's brennivín has retained the same packaging meant to deter consumers a century ago.

HVÖNN & SÖL - Hand-crafted, small batch Icelandic aquavit. Infusions include seaweed, angelica, and blueberries.

Finnish Aquavit: Koskenkorva

Finns tend to be more vodka and Koskenkorva – a grain alcohol that falls somewhere between vodka and aquavit – drinkers, but Nordic aquavit is starting to stake a national claim. Ironically, Finland is the largest producer of caraway in the world but only started distilling aquavit commercially within the last decade. In 2014, the Helsinki Distilling Company launched its craft Helsingfors Fiskehamns Akvavit. It was Finland's first local aquavit and the first distillery in Helsinki in over a century.

HOW FINNS DRINK KOSKENKORVA?

Cold and in copious amounts from July to September during their annual crayfish parties, *kräftskiva*; a tradition brought over by Swede-Finns.

Fun Finnish aquavit fact: There is a story in Finland about an aquavit cocktail named after Baron Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim, a Finnish military leader, statesman, and former president. The cocktail is called *marssin ryyppy*, or "marshal's shot," and was created during World War II after Mannerheim requested something be done about the poor-tasting vodka. There is an ongoing debate about what was in the drink, but it was most likely a mixture of aquavit, gin, and French vermouth.

FINNISH AKVAVIT BRANDS TO TRY

HELSINKI DISTILLING COMPANY - HDCo's Helsingfors Fiskehamns Akvavit is a spicy aquavit that is matured for weeks in French oak and hand-bottled in their Oslo distillery. They recommend that you serve it chilled.



Swedish Aquavit: Brännvin

Aquavit is known as brännvin in Sweden, but you will usually hear it referred to or written as snaps. Aquavit was first documented in Sweden in 1467, when it was cited in instructions for lighting gunpowder. By the 16th century, Swedes everywhere were, well, getting buzzed off snaps, and grain-based versions were being distilled in all major cities. Despite efforts by the Swedish crown to restrict or monopolize its production, snaps only grew in popularity. It is estimated that Sweden produced upwards of 100 million liters of snaps annually in the 1830s. At the time, the country only had 3 million people.

Improvements in technology and the wider availability of raw potatoes brought about more varieties of higher quality Swedish snaps in the 1800s.

HOW SWEDES DRINK BRÄNNVIN?

Chilled and preferably from a tulip-shaped glass. You'll see it everywhere at festivals, parties, and other special occasions like Midsommar, Christmas, and the annual crayfish all-you-can-eat.

Fun Swedish aquavit fact: Swedes love to sing before taking a shot of snaps and the Vin & Sprithistoriska Museet in Stockholm documents this joyous tradition. Since 1992 they have amassed a collection of over 12,000 Swedish *snapsvisor*, or "drinking songs," and hold competitions every year to ensure new ones are added to the list.

SWEDISH SNAPS BRANDS TO TRY

O.P. ANDERSON ORIGINAL AQUAVIT - Sweden's oldest and best-selling aquavit. It made its grand debut in 1891 at the Gothenburg Exhibition Fair.

QVÄNUM MAT & MALT - A family-run farm, brewery, and distillery in western Sweden. Their snaps and beers are crafted to complement various dishes.

GAMMAL NORRLANDS AKVAVIT - A spicy aquavit named after Swedish writer Torgny Lindgren's 2007 novel. It contains a splash of sherry and has a bright amber color.

