

POLUGAR. A REVIVAL

What comes to your mind when you think about the Russian national drink? Vodka, of course. The word is famous, but its meaning has changed a lot with time. What kind of vodka was they used to drink in the times of Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Dostoevsky, Chekhov or Pushkin, i.e. 200, 300, or 500 years ago? Which Russian vodka was so highly thought of by the European kings and queens and noblemen?

It was very different from the modern vodka. Back then the huge industrial fractionating columns required to produce pure (96%) ethyl alcohol simply did not exist. The industrial process was invented in Western Europe for chemical industry and reached Russia in 1870 only.

Absolutely every vodka in the world, produced between 1895 and 2015, is based on rectified pure alcohol (96% spirit) without taste and aroma. Back then (before 1895) vodka was a grain drink distilled in copper pot stills just like single malt whisky and was called Breadwine or Polugar.



VS.



Thanks to a recipe discovered in an 18th century book by the well-known Russian vodka historian, academic and writer, Boris Rodionov, you have an opportunity to try the drink of the pre-20th century Russian nobility. It is the "father" of Russian vodkas which had not been produced between 1895 and 2010.

200 years ago this drink could be called “Vodka”, “Breadwine”, or “Polugar”. But since the word “vodka” has changed its meaning and is now used to designate 96% ethyl alcohol diluted with water down to 40%, it was decided to use the word “Polugar” for the revived ancient Russian drink.

The word Polugar means “half-burned”. Back then alcohol meters had not been invented, but there was a need to measure the strength of drink to determine its price. They would use the following test - boil and burn two portions of the drink and, after burning, one portion of water should be left. In other words, the drink was half burned away, which is why it got the name "Polugar" (from the Russian word for "half-burned"). Measured with an alcohol meter, the strength of Polugar would be 38.5%.

Polugar was banned in Russia back in 1895 when a state monopoly was introduced along with a simpler and quicker way of making big amounts of vodka by mixing pure ethyl alcohol with water. All the traditional distilleries with their copper pot stills were destroyed. Alcohol started being produced using modern technologies in industrial distillation columns, and the recipes of the grain distillates of the nobility were forgotten.

Current Russian legislation still forbids traditional grain distillation in Russia. Only ultra-pure 96% ethyl alcohol for vodka can be made from grain. Which is why «Rodionov & Sons» produces Polugar on the territory of Poland. Their private distillery is a part of an old mansion in a wooded area, away from manufacturing sites, roads, and large cities.

For distillation in traditional copper pot stills (alembics) only select farming rye, natural water, and traditional brewing technologies are used. It is hand made in limited volumes, and requires a lot of attention and mastership to carefully separate the pure part of the distillate from toxic heads and tails while preserving the taste and aroma of grains.

To maximise the result and further the purity, the drink is distilled three times, and purified with natural egg white. Being an alternative to the long ageing in oak barrels used to produce single malt Scottish whisky, this technique carefully preserves the taste of the raw materials - a delicious aromatic rye flavour.

In terms of taste, Polugar is unlike any other alcoholic drink available today. It has notes of natural bread in taste and aroma. It is not a modern vodka, but a more ancient type of alcohol, which used to be made in Russia from the 17th century to the end of the 19th century.



Polugar №1 Rye & Wheat

Russian 18th century “breadwine”, triple distilled rye & wheat.

Aroma: homemade bread.

Taste: delicate, slightly sweet, warm rye and wheat bread, crackers, bread crust, honey tones.

Recommendations: borsch, fish, caviar, Olivier salad, pancakes, beef, chicken, pork, venison, rabbit, dumplings, stroganoff, grilled sausages.

Volume - 500 ml. Alcohol - 38.5%.



Polugar №2 Garlic & Pepper

Russian 18th century “breadwine”, triple distilled rye & wheat.

Aroma: bright aroma of baked garlic and hot pepper.

Taste: warming and saturated taste of baked garlic, hot pepper, wheat and rye bread.

Recommendations: herring, marinated fish, pickles, lamb, pork, borsch, pancakes, caviar, dumplings, lard with garlic on bread.

Volume - 500 ml. Alcohol - 38.5%.



**Polugar №3
Caraway**

Russian 18th century “breadwine”, triple distilled rye & wheat.

Aroma: rich bouquet of warm rye bread, caraway, dry grass, coriander, dill, spices, black pepper.

Taste: gourmet, slightly sweet, rye, cumin, dill, caraway, butter.

Recommendations: pickles, sauerkraut, herring, salmon, smoked or lightly salted fish, duck, lard or butter on bread.

Volume - 500 ml. Alcohol - 38.5%.



**Polugar №4
Honey & Allspice**

Russian 18th century “breadwine”, triple distilled rye & wheat.

Aroma: aromatic pepper and honey, cinnamon, dried parsley, bay leaf, basil, nutmeg.

Taste: tender & spiced with pleasant hotness, honey, rum, sweet sugar syrup, rye crust, and fine notes of pickle.

Recommendations: baked white fish, mashed potatoes, crab cakes, dorado, fish soup, roast lamb with spices.

Volume - 500 ml. Alcohol - 38.5%.



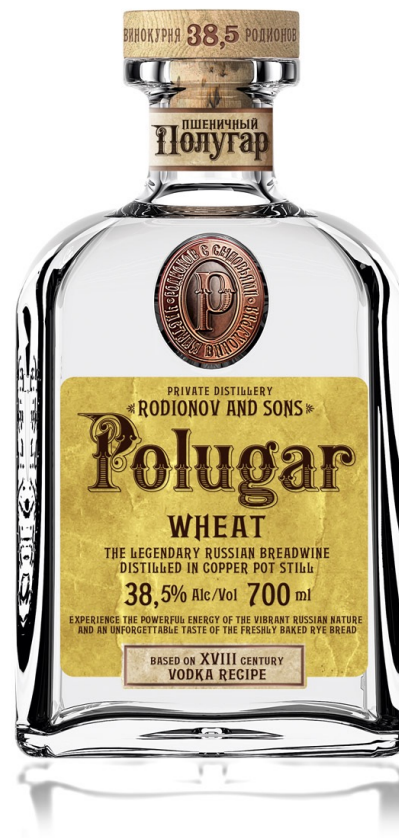
Polugar
Classic Rye

Russian 18th century “breadwine”, triple distilled malted and non-malted rye.

Aroma: bright and rich aroma of warm homemade bread, coriander, grains, wild flowers, with slight sweetness of malt & honey.

Taste: complex, mild taste of fresh rye bread, linden honey, almond, meadow grasses and grains, with slight bitterness of rye.

Volume - 615 ml. Alcohol - 38.5%.



Polugar
Wheat

Russian 18th century “breadwine”, triple distilled malted and non-malted wheat.

Aroma: mild, round and delicate aroma of warm wheat crumbs, grain and bread, hay, dry grass, slightly salty, pickled cabbage, semi-sweet honey.

Taste: white bread with salty and grassy notes, and elegant bitterness of flowers.

Volume - 615 ml. Alcohol - 38.5%.



Polugar
Krivach 61

The most provocative Russian spirit, malted rye triple distilled to 61% strength.

Aroma: cool grain notes and bright aroma of warm home baking, notes of red apple, yellow plum, and meadow grasses.

Taste: powerful, masculine, warming, with notes of hot rye bread crust, crackers, and bread.

Volume - 700 ml. Alcohol - 61%.



Polugar
Single Malt Rye

The most authentic Russian spirit, triple distilled single malt rye.

Aroma: bright and rich aroma of warm homemade bread, coriander, grains, wild flowers, with slight sweetness of malt & honey.

Taste: complex, mild taste of fresh rye bread, linden honey, almond, meadow grasses and grains, with slight bitterness of rye.

Volume - 615 ml. Alcohol - 38.5%.

