



Does Absinthe make the heart grow fonder?



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Manager Bronwen Nikora with an assortment of absinthe drinks
Commune Lounge, Royal Oak, MI

So what is absinthe?

Absinthe is a highly alcoholic anise-flavored spirit derived from herbs, including the flowers and leaves of the *Artemisia absinthium*. Traditionally green in color, it is commonly referred to in historical literature as "la fee verte"—the green fairy.

And where can I sample some?

Recently, I had the pleasure of tasting a couple different variations on absinthe at Royal Oak's **Commune Lounge**. This bar, perfectly situated in the lower level of the Bastone Complex, has a somewhat dark and mystical feel. You walk in, and know right away that something a little out of the ordinary is going on.

The Commune is a fairly open space, with seating at the bar, in several booths, and in a couple private nooks that can be reserved in advance.

We started with a glass of absinthe, prepared in the traditional way. A shot of absinthe is poured into a glass. Next, a sugar cube is placed on top of a specially designed slotted spoon. Ice cold water is slow dripped over the sugar cube so that the water is evenly displaced into the absinthe—typically one part absinthe and 3-5 parts water.

The end result is a smooth, mellow, delicious drink that tastes pretty much like licorice, but without the sweetness. Sip slowly and enjoy. Have a couple and don't plan to operate any heavy machinery. The mellow, somewhat blissful state, will stick around for a while.

We also tried the Bohemian Revolution, made with Absinthe Ordinaire, blue curacao, orange juice and fresh lemon. Green in color, this drink had a unique orange taste to it that somehow paired well with the absinthe's natural licorice flavor.

The Commune Lounge is located below Bastone at 419 S. Main Street, Royal Oak. Doors open at 6 p.m. See you there!

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