

The Drac-u-Latte



Tradition is important in the wine business. Vintners often cultivate grapevines that are centuries old. It's unusual for anyone to try something brand new and still prosper. But that's exactly what Mary had done with Acme Wine and Spirits, an upstart company based in her basement. Her whole business model was shaped by a yearlong stint as a lab technician at St. Salmon's Hospital, where she worked analyzing "bodily fluids." She found that some of them, when mixed with other liquid comestibles, produced uncommon and occasionally tasty cocktails. The one that got her business off the ground was called the "Drac-u-Latte." Mary declined to name its ingredients, but the beverage's bright red color and plasma-like aftertaste left little doubt as to its origins. *What's that? you say. The ingredients aren't identified? But isn't that illegal?* Normally it is. But the oddest thing happened when Buddy from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration inspected Mary's manufacturing plant. After he'd sampled a couple Drac-u-Lattes, he forgot all about the FDA's regulatory imprimatur. He also began to conduct all of his business at night, refusing to schedule appointments during daylight hours. Mary, meanwhile, was busy concocting a cocktail out of vodka and one of her specialty fluids that *looked* like tomato juice. It was so distinctive that it quickly made a name for itself, one that reflected its creator: the "Bleedin' Mary."