

# Absinthe Country

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## NEUCHÂTEL

### The Musée International d'Horlogerie



The Musée International d'Horlogerie (MIH) is a museum located in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, dedicated to horology, which is the study of time, timekeeping and timekeeping devices (primarily clocks and watches).

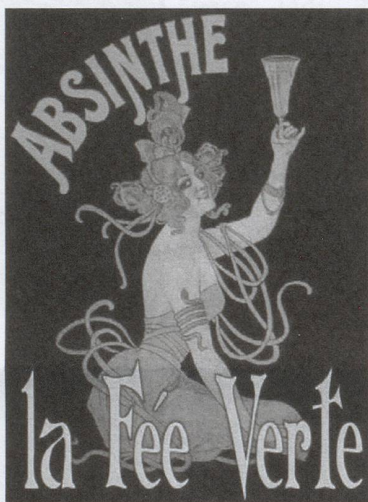
Historically the city of La Chaux-de-Fonds is considered one of the focal points of the Swiss watch-

making industry. The museum grew out of the study collection of the watchmakers' school, and is considered today among the broadest and most comprehensive watch and clock museums of the world. In addition to constantly changing temporary exhibits the museum features permanent displays from its vast collection of watches and clocks throughout history. While the collection is obviously strong on Swiss pieces it covers most places where timekeepers were made in any quantity.

### Absinthe Country

Absinthe is historically described as a distilled, highly alcoholic (45%-74%) beverage. It is an anise-flavored spirit derived from herbs, mainly anise, fennel and the flowers and leaves of the herb *Artemisia absinthium*, commonly referred to as "grande wormwood". Absinthe traditionally has a natural green color but can also be colorless. It is commonly referred to in historical literature as "la fée verte" (the Green Fairy).

Absinthe originated in the canton of Neuchâtel. It achieved great popularity as an alcoholic drink in late 19th- and early 20th-century France, particularly among Parisian artists and writers. Due in part to its association with Bohemian culture, absinthe was opposed by social conservatives and prohibitionists. Charles Baudelaire, Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Amadeo Modigliani, Vincent van Gogh, Oscar Wilde were all notorious 'bad men' of that day who were (or were thought to



be) devotees of the Green Fairy.

Absinthe was portrayed as a dangerously addictive psychoactive drug. By 1915, absinthe had been banned in the United States and in most European countries. Although absinthe was vilified, no evidence has shown it to be any more dangerous than ordinary spirits. Its psychoactive properties, apart from those of alcohol, have been much exaggerated.

A revival of absinthe began in the 1990s, when countries in the European Union began to reauthorize its manufacture and sale. As of February 2008, nearly 200 brands of absinthe were being produced in a dozen countries.

*Trudi's comment: When I decided to find an article on Absinthe for the readers of the Helvetia, I was overwhelmed by the material available on the internet; we could have filled several Helvetias with Absinthe only. What is the attraction of Absinthe?*

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