

THE  
  
**essencia**  
**EXPRESS STILL**



- This still represents the next generation in home distillation equipment.
- It eliminates the problem of having to spend all day processing a 25 litre wash.
- Taking 1 hour to heat up, then producing distillate at a rate of over 2 litres per hour, your processing time is slashed to around 3 ½ hours from switch on.
- The *essencia* Express Still not only produces distillate at a very fast rate, it produces distillate at around 90% ABV!
- Comes supplied with a tap for easy emptying.
- When you use the *essencia* Express Still in conjunction with other products in the *essencia* range you will soon be producing the finest quality spirits and liqueurs available to the home distiller.

**WARNING**

- It is legal in New Zealand to own and operate a still for the purpose of producing alcohol for your own consumption.
- It is illegal to sell home distilled alcohol.
- In areas outside New Zealand you will need to check with the local authorities.
- If it is not legal to distil your own alcohol, skip this section on distillation. You will need to filter and carbon treat the cleared wash to produce an alcohol at around 16%.

# Distillation using the *essencia* Express Still

## Assembly.

1. Fit the reflux column/condenser to the domed lid ensuring the silicon gasket sits between the column and the **outside** surface of the lid. Tighten until a good seal is achieved (do not over tighten).



2. Fit the supplied tap as shown.

3. Fit the thermometer probe fully into the rubber bung (wetting the bung will make this easier).

4. Locate the still on a firm, heat resistant base ensuring the water hoses reach a cold water supply and drain.

## Distillation.

1. Make sure the tap on the boiler is closed. Pour the fully fermented and cleared wash into the boiler leaving the sediment in the fermenter. (The liquid level must not rise above the top indentation ring in the boiler, ie no more than 25 litres)

2. Place the opened clamping ring onto the boiler so it rests at the base.

3. Fit the lid and condenser unit. Fit the clamping ring to secure the lid to the boiler. Fit the bung (with the thermometer probe in place) firmly into the top of the reflux column.



4. Plug in the element ensuring the plug is pushed fully and firmly into the element base. Make sure that no other high drain device is plugged into the same outlet. **Note:** the *essencia* Express Still will draw about 8 ½ amps. Standard power outlets are rated at 10 amps. It is important that the 10 amp power outlet limit is not exceeded.

5. The *essencia* Express Still will come up to temperature in approximately 55 minutes. Start running the cooling water within 45 minutes of turning on the still. Due to the speed of the *essencia* Express Still it is important that you have the cooling water running by the time it comes up to temperature. See '**Notes on cooling water flow**' below.

6. Once the still is up to temperature, collect and discard the first 50 ml of distillate that comes off. This first 50 ml is the 'Head' and is not drinkable. **It must be discarded.**

Once the head has been removed, collect the body of the distillate in a container which is large enough to hold the expected quantity of distillate (generally a 5 litre plastic jug is ideal). **Note** it is very important that the distillate collection tube remains above the level of the collected distillate. **Never** let the distillate collection tube become immersed in the collected distillate.

7. Once you are collecting the 'body', recheck your cooling water flow rate. The *essencia* Express still is quite forgiving on water flow fluctuations, however you may find the flow will slowly decrease during distillation so it pays to recheck it every half-hour or so.

Throughout most of the collecting period the thermometer should be reading 77–78°C. Towards the end of the collection process the temperature may rise towards 84°C, the distillate flow will slow dramatically and the alcohol strength will fall. Once the flow becomes a slow drip (approx. 2 per second) there is no point in continuing to collect. Turn off the still ensuring first that the end of the distillate collection tube is not immersed in the collected distillate.

8. If you want to obtain the highest quality drinking alcohol it is recommended that you use *essencia* Super 6 Yeast. This yeast produces virtually no volatiles during fermentation which means the distilled product is a lot cleaner. This being the case you should now have collected over 3 ½ litres of distillate at around 90% ABV and you have done it very quickly.

A 'Yeast Efficiency Calculator' is available from the 'downloads' page of the *essencia* website which enables you to compare the efficiency of the yeasts you use.

### Notes on cooling water flow.

It is the operating temperature which is critical, rather than the cooling water flow rate. If you want the best quality distillate at a good fast rate, adjust the cooling water flow so that the digital thermometer reads 77-78°C.

Cold water temperatures vary greatly between winter and summer, and in different locations. While the *essencia* Express Still is relatively tolerant of these changes in temperature you will have to adjust the average flow of the water to maintain optimum performance. As a guide, 750 mls/min will be a good flow rate for cold water temperatures of around 17°C. At 22°C and above, you may need to increase this to 950 mls/min or greater. At 13°C and below, approx. 650 mls/min will do the job.

As you become more experienced in distilling and more familiar with your *essencia* Express Still, you will know "by feel" what the flow rate should be. Don't stress too much about cooling water flow. If anything, err on the high side at the start of the distillation run, and then slowly decrease the flow bit by bit (allowing two minutes between adjustments), down to a point where the temperature starts to increase above 77-78°C. Increase the flow slightly from this point to bring the temperature back down to 77-78°C. Measure the water flow rate at this point and record it. This is your minimum flow rate.

### Cleaning.

Your *essencia* Express Still should be cleaned regularly.

After running the still, turn it off and empty the boiler via the tap directly into a sink or tub. Rinse out the boiler with water only. Do not use detergents.

#### To clean the reflux column and condenser.

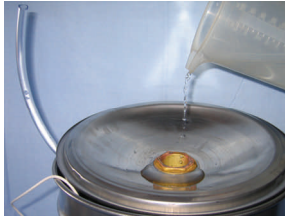
1. Fit the bung (with the thermometer probe in place) firmly into the top of the reflux column.
2. Place the condenser/reflux column (still attached to the lid) upside down into the top of the empty boiler. Leave the tubing and thermometer **outside** the boiler.
3. Dissolve one teaspoon of citric acid in 600 ml of hot water. Pour this into the up-turned base of the reflux column until full. Make sure the end of the distillate collection tube is outside the boiler and higher than the edge of the up-turned lid.
4. Leave soaking for around 20 minutes. The digital thermometer will show the temperature of the fluid inside the reflux column. Do not proceed further until the temperature has dropped below 40°C.
5. Lift the lid from the boiler just enough to allow you to reach the thermometer probe and bung. Remove the bung and allow the citric acid solution to drain into the boiler. Transfer the lid, reflux column, condenser and tubing to a laundry tub or similar.

6. Keeping the lid and condenser inverted, flush the reflux column and packing well with cold water. To flush the condenser, stick the end of the distillate collection tube up the tap. Water will flow through the condenser and out the bung hole in the top of the column.

7. Empty the citric acid solution from the boiler and rinse out the boiler.



Place into boiler



Pour into up-turned base



Remove bung and drain



Flush column and packing

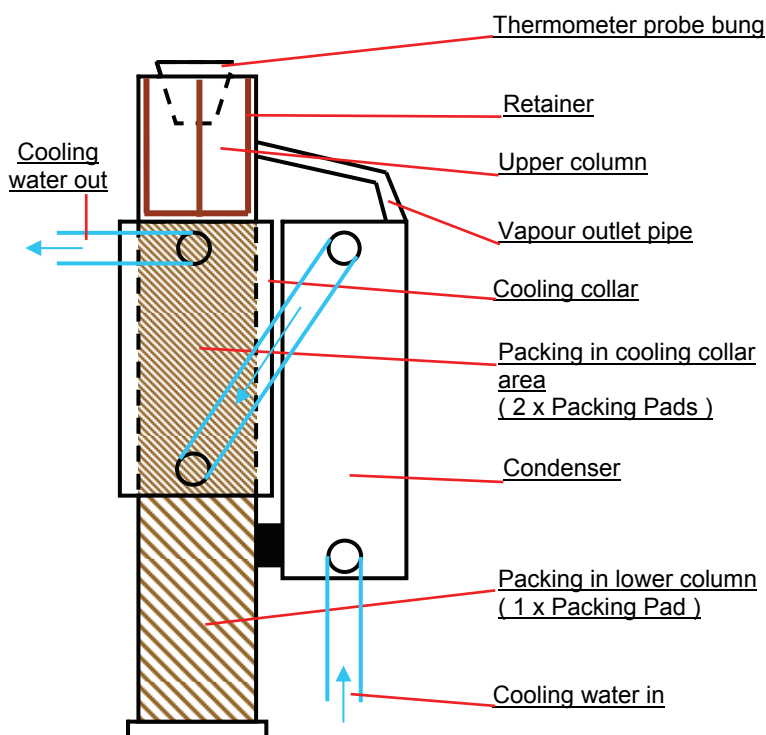


Flush condenser via tube

**Note:** The packing will need to be replaced periodically as it does wear out and become less efficient. New packing is available from your specialist home brew store.

## Replacing the column packing.

1. Remove the column from the lid.
2. Remove the three packing pads through the bottom of the column. Use a large screwdriver etc through the bung hole to push the top two packing pads down.
3. Holding the column upside down, make sure the retainer is in place at the top of the column. Fit the first packing pad through the bottom of the column. Using the handle of a hammer or similar, push the pad up the column and compact it against the retainer.
4. Fit the second pad and compact it so that it is level with the **bottom** edge of the cooling collar.
5. Fit the third pad into the lower column but do not compact this pad.
6. Check that the packing at the top of the column is level with the **top** edge of the cooling collar.



## Troubleshooting.

### \* Running the still causes the circuit breaker to trip:

- There are too many appliances plugged in to the circuit you are using for the still, or the circuit breaker is old and/or under rated. The *essencia* Express will draw around 8 ½ amps – the same as a small fan heater. You should not run other appliances from the same outlet while running the still.

### \* After distilling off about 3 litres of alcohol the temperature drops right down, the distillate flow stops, then a large amount of wash flows through the condenser into the collection container:

- This problem is caused by excessive foaming of the wash in the still and occurs when there is too much unfermented sugar in the wash. It is very important to follow the fermentation instructions on your yeast exactly. Use a good grade of sugar. Adding extra sugar will not produce more alcohol; it will only waste sugar and may lead to this boil through problem in the distillation process.

### \* Distillate flow is slow and alcohol % is low soon after distillate starts flowing:

- Check for vapour leaks around the lid clamping ring, the base of the reflux column or the thermometer probe bung. If a leak is found, turn off the still, check for obstructions in seal areas, rotate the lid about 45 degrees on the boiler and ensure all seals are tight. Turn on the still again and recheck for leaks once the still has come up to temperature. If leaks are still present contact your retailer.

### \* Alcohol % is low (65%) when distillate starts flowing, and stays that way:

- Turn off the still, wait for the condenser to cool and remove the lid. Take precautions to avoid scalding, as the wash will be hot. Remove the packing and re pack the column following the procedure described previously. Return the low strength distillate to the wash. Reassemble the still, and start again.

### \* Alcohol % is low to mid 80's, temperature won't go below 80°C, distillate flow is generally slow and the cooling water flow rate needs to be high:

- This problem occurs when the column packing pushes up past the retainer in the upper column. To rectify the problem simply turn off the still and remove the bung and thermometer probe. Push the packing down using a blunt instrument through the bung hole at the top of the column. The top of the packing should be level with, or slightly below the top of the cooling collar.

### Safety Note

- When using or troubleshooting the still, the metal body becomes very hot.
- Do not allow skin to come in contact with it.
- Be especially careful if you are disassembling the still, for any reason, that the metal parts and the liquid inside are allowed to cool to a safe temperature before handling.

To keep up to date with the latest products and information, or if you need questions answered, visit the website at [www.essencia.co.nz](http://www.essencia.co.nz) or [www.essencia.com.au](http://www.essencia.com.au)