

Vodka Tasting Notes

Fruit infusion was only the first phase of the vodka revolution. Take a look at these new innovations that have recently hit the market.

26000 Vodka

A Sip of the Ice Age

Warren Bermingham, creator of this premium handcrafted New Zealand grain vodka, is a big proponent of the theory that the quality of the water dictates the quality of the vodka. With 26000 Vodka, he takes the concept of pristine water to a whole new level by utilizing water from an ice age glacier reservoir discovered in the Tasman region of the South Island of New Zealand. The 260-centuries-old pristine paleowater, the authenticity of which was confirmed by the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Science, is said to give 26000 its smoothness. Previously Bermingham spent time studying vodka production in its birthplace Poland, and was General Manager of London's Revolution Vodka Bars a renowned bar chain that specializes in branded and flavored vodka.

Now, he offers his 26000 Vodka in three infusions: Crystalline, organic Raspberry & Lemon Drop, and Lychee. While Crystalline's taste is billed as being "as smooth as fresh air," the other varieties offer more complexity. The flavor combination of lychee, blossoms and peach in Lychee provides a hint of the Orient. Meanwhile, Raspberry & Lemon Drop strives to capture the essence of summer, with raspberry up front and a refreshing lemon bite on the back end.

End Note: Each bottle features a timeline illustrating the product's journey from raw resource to premium product.

www.26000vodka.com



Swan's Neck Vodka

Vine-tastic

The distinction of this limited-release vodka comes from the uncommon materials used to create it. While most vodkas are produced from potatoes and grain, Swan's Neck Vodka starts with grapes grown in French vineyards. Napa Valley winemaker Bernard Portet, who co-founded Clos Du Val winery in 1972, created this elegant unaged spirit, which has been said to be something of a cross between cognac (distilled from wine but aged in oak) and grappa (distilled from fermented grape-crush remnants instead of wine, but not aged).

The manufacturing process is also unique. Grapes are made into wine, which is first column distilled, and then twice again distilled by using French traditional copper alembic pot stills, which are said to open up and release the grape aromatics and flavor essences while softening the liquid spirits. The result is a very silky and fragrant spirit. With its aroma of freshly fermented grapes, the Swan's Neck Original Vodka's palate is velvety, balanced and elegant, with great finesses and a hint of chocolate flavors. For a more refreshing sip, the Swan's Neck Lemon Zest Vodka offers a nice, round and great finesse in its palate.

End Note: The name Swan's Neck is a translation of the French phrase "col de cygnet," which refers to the curved portion of the alembic's copper piping that carries distillate vapors away from the onion-shaped kettle top.

www.swansneckvodka.com





WOKKA SAKI

East meets West

Say "konichiwa" to WOKKA SAKI, the first ever vodka saké brand. A blend of micro-distilled grain vodka (80 percent), fine Japanese saké (20 percent) and the subtle essence of Asian fruit, WOKKA SAKI goes through a three-step micro-distillation process in a stainless steel pot to achieve a smooth taste. The producers also do regular sensory testing to ensure that the end product is of the highest quality. Both the vodka and saké are tasted before blending. After the long and closely monitored blending process and fruit infusion are complete, the WOKKA SAKI is once again tasted, this time against earlier bottlings. The result is a high-class vodka with the subtle flavors of lychees, apricots and even star fruit, together with an underpinning of saké.

End Note: According to the beverage's Web site, WOKKA SAKI is personified by the creation of the Snow Monsters (a phenomenon found around Japan's Asahi mountains between January and March, when powerful winds from the Siberian plains whip the surface of the Sea of Japan and the mountains' trees become caked in tremendous amounts of ice and snow, thus resembling giant monsters):

"The Western wind (represented by vodka), the eastern environment (saké) and the beautiful and unique outcome (WOKKA SAKI)."

www.wokkasaki.com

www.iVALUERICH.com

Vodka O₂

Effervescent Appeal

Tonic water is so five minutes ago. With the introduction of Vodka O₂, now there's no need to sacrifice purity to gain a little fizz. After nearly two years in development, International English Distillers has perfected and patent protected a process to create the world's first-ever sparkling vodka, which according to them was previously deemed impossible. Vodka O₂ is 100 percent British Premium Pure Grain 80 proof vodka that has been batch distilled and filtered three times in a 100-year-old copper pot still for an incredibly smooth taste. Its blend of wheat, malted barley and charcoal-filtered English spring water gives the vodka a distinctive crystal clear quality that sparkles on the palate while the infused bubbles create a lightly effervescent texture that gently tingles the tongue. Tired of trying to balance your cocktail while you nosh on appetizers? The Vodka O₂ creators have come up with a solution in the form of their Tapastinis™, an off-shoot of the classic vodka martini with flavorful bites actually immersed in the cocktails. While the Jellybini sounds intriguing, the Caviartini and Sushitini may be for the more adventurous.

End Note: In addition to cocktail and Tapastini recipes, the Web site features a Pac-Man-inspired game which visitors can play. It doesn't have much to do with vodka (especially since there's no longer a free bottle sent each month to the player with the highest score), but it's still a fun distraction and a nod to '80s entertainment.

www.sparklingvodka.com

