



August 2016

# Grapevine

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Store Hours: Mon – Sat, 9 – 9 & Sun, 12 – 6

## Beguiling Spirits: A Closer Look at Vodka



Inside Harvest Spirits Farm Distillery's tasting room.

Clear, clean vodka was first used in Medieval Russia topically. Only after Peter the Great made it popular for both pleasure and punishment — mandatory mega-shots for those who arrived late to his dinner table — did it become imbued with Russian identity.

Vodka may be the leading spirit for US consumers, but it wasn't always the case. When first brought to the US, it was no match for America's love of brown spirits, though it made a medal-winning appearance at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Not until after the lifting of Prohibition in 1934 did American consumers take a subtle shine to this colorless, odorless spirit. The Bloody Mary and Screwdriver came in the 1930s, and the

Moscow Mule debuted in 1946, but the 1950s marketing tag 'Smirnoff leaves you breathless' ushered vodka onto the American spirits scene.

Vodka can be made from nearly anything, though grain and potato are the most popular. After being distilled and filtered, the high alcohol spirit is then diluted with water. Typically, the finished product is 40% alcohol, or 80 proof — considered the ideal between watery and fiery.

**Belvedere**, meaning *beautiful to see*, comes from Poland and is made from sustainably grown Dankowskie golden rye from the country's Mazovian plains and water from Belvedere's own wells. Distilled four times in the

100-year-old distillery, it is creamy and tinged with pepper spice. \$41.99 liter

**Crop Organic Harvest Earth Artisanal Vodka**, distilled from organic grain hails from Minnesota. Herbal with a tinge of heat, Crop is distilled only as many times as necessary, varying from batch to batch. \$23.99 750 ml

**Barber's Farm Distillery 1857 Potato Vodka** from Middleburgh, NY is one of a few of our region's local spirit gems. (The Barber family, farming for six generations, has also been a fixture at area farmers markets over the years, selling vegetables and dairy products.) Called *1857* because that's the year the family began farming in the Schoharie Valley, it is made in small batches from their farm-grown potatoes and spring water. With a touch of textural creaminess, it is clean, bracing and smooth. \$33.59 750 ml

**Harvest Spirits Farm Distillery's Core Vodka** from Valatie, NY, is made from apples sustainably grown on the family's Golden Harvest Farms, one of the Hudson Valley's prize sources of apples. Made from thrice-distilled hard cider, using 60 pounds of apples for every bottle, it has

a floral nose, a pared-down, dry palate and a long, clean finish. \$33.59 750 ml

Many shun flavored vodkas, but we want to celebrate the collaboration of two local artisans — Albany Distilling Co., Albany's first distillery since Prohibition, and Death Wish Coffee Company from Round Lake, which drew national attention with a 30-second spot on the 2016 Super Bowl. Together, they bring us **Albany Distilling Co. Death Wish Vodka**. *Wow*. The coffee is cold-brewed and combined with Albany Distilling Co.'s distilled Hudson Valley grain vodka and a touch of sugar to bring out the caramel notes, then whole coffee beans are added, and the mix is distilled again. Dark, smooth and flavorful, it's more than worthy of a try by hedonists and purists alike. \$29.99 liter ♦

**Incredible Savings!**  
**15% off all Wine —**  
**Every Bottle,**  
**Every Day!!!**

**Did you know...** The origins of vodka are believed to have originated in the grain-growing regions that now embrace Poland, western Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. It also has a long tradition in Scandinavia.

## Wine Tastings Fri, 4-7 & Sat, 2-5

**Fri 8/5: Red, White & Rosé:** Terrific Summer sippers.

**Sat 8/6, 8/13, 8/20 & 8/27: Winning New Arrivals**

**Fri 8/12: August Staff Picks:** Our latest favorites.

**Fri 8/19: Unrated Gems:** Some fabulous wines don't have ratings, and we think you should know about them.

**Fri 8/26: West Coast Winners: Winning wines** from California, Washington and Oregon.

**Fri 9/2: Labor Day Wines:** Whites and reds for the autumn months ahead and your Labor Day picnic.

### **Penne alla Vodka** *Adapted from Ina Garten*

¼ cup olive oil  
1 medium Spanish onion(s), chopped, 2½ cups  
3 cloves of garlic, minced  
¼ - ½ tsp crushed red pepper flakes  
1½ tsp dried oregano  
1 cup vodka  
2 (28-ounce) cans peeled plum tomatoes  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper  
¾ lb penne pasta  
4 Tbsp fresh oregano  
¼ to 1 cup heavy cream  
grated Parmigiano or Pecorino



Preheat oven to 375°F. Heat oil in a large oven proof pan over medium, add onions and garlic and cook for 5 minutes until translucent. Add red pepper flakes and dried oregano and cook for 1 minute. Add vodka and continue cooking until the mixture is reduced by half, 5 to 7 minutes.

Meanwhile, drain the tomatoes through a sieve, and crush them into the pan with your hands. Add 2 teaspoons salt and a pinch of black pepper. Cover the pan with a tight fitting lid and place it in the oven for 1½ hours.

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook the pasta al dente. Drain and set aside. Place the tomato mixture in a blender or food processor and purée until smooth. Return sauce to the pan and reheat, add 2 tablespoons fresh oregano and heavy cream. Add salt and pepper, to taste, and simmer for 10 minutes. Toss in pasta and cook for 2 minutes more. Stir in a generous handful of grated cheese. Serve with additional cheese and remaining oregano, and enjoy with *Joe's August staff pick*.

## News & Events

### **Smirnoff Vodka 1.75 Liter Summer Sale**

This month, we're having an unbelievable sale on 1.75 liter bottles of Smirnoff Vodka, all flavors, with a mail-in-rebate. Sale price is \$17.99, regularly \$25.99.

#### **Single-bottle purchase**

**\$17.99 (reg \$25.99)  
- \$8.00 mail-in-rebate  
\$ 9.99 your final cost!**

#### **Six-bottle purchase**

**\$107.94 (\$17.99 x 6)  
- \$60.00 mail-in-rebate  
\$47.94 your final cost!  
That's \$7.99 per bottle  
after mail-in-rebate!**

### **Watermelon Vodka Mojito**

*Sheila's Current Favorite  
Summer Cocktail*

Fresh, fruity, and not too sweet, this is an August cocktail that is meant for pool parties and sunset gazing.

#### **INGREDIENTS**

6 large chunks seeded watermelon  
8-10 mint leaves, plus more for garnish  
2 tsp superfine sugar  
10 oz fresh lime juice  
2 oz your favorite vodka



#### **DIRECTIONS**

Muddle the watermelon, mint leaves and sugar until the mint leaves are broken down and the sugar is no longer grainy. Add lime juice and muddle some more. Add vodka, stir and pour into two or three ice-filled Tom Collins glasses and garnish with more mint leaves. Toast to summer.

## August 2016 Staff Wine Picks

**Sheila: NV Gloria Ferrer Blanc de Noirs Sparkling Wine (Carneros) \$16.99 (reg \$19.99) 90 WS** A 92/8 blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, it has floral and raspberry aromas and a crisp finish. \*Grilled spatchcocked chicken

**Joe: 2014 Mauro Molino Barbera d'Alba (Piedmont) \$10.19 (reg \$11.99)** Aged in steel tanks for six months, it has an irresistible, fruity bouquet with scents of ripe red berries and minerals \*Penne alla Vodka, recipe shown above

**Max: 2014 Cartlidge & Browne Pinot Noir (North Coast) \$11.49 (reg \$14.99)** Earthy, raspberry aromas segue to a fruit-forward palate, tinged with mushrooms and tomato leaf and a round finish. \*Grilled pork chops

**Ian: 2012 Terra Noble Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Chile) \$15.49 (reg \$17.99) 90 WS** Aged in barrique and stainless steel for 12 months, it is toasty and full-bodied with smooth tannins. \*Steak fajitas

**Bill: 2015 Bernard Defaix Petit Chablis (Burgundy) \$13.69 (reg \$15.99)** Fermented wild and aged on the lees for ten months in glass-lined tanks, it is vibrant with ripe stone fruit and citrus notes. \*Pan-seared sea scallops

**Karen: 2014 O'Mar Bordeaux Blanc (Bordeaux) \$11.99 (reg \$13.99)** Created to pay homage to the sea and to accompany seafood, this Sauvignon Blanc with citrus notes is crisp, dry and fresh. \*Raw oysters with mignonette