

* RED, WHITE & BOOZE

A versatile wheat vodka

We review a new organic wheat vodka and a French rose

Daily staff reports
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Blue Ice Organic Wheat Vodka, \$30

Vodka is a very versatile liquor. Because it is composed solely of ethanol and water, its mild taste can be used in combination with a great number of other liqueurs and mixers and it livens up simple dishes without overpowering other flavors.



Blue Ice Organic Wheat Vodka is an excellent example of a spirit that enhances pretty much anything it accompanies.

As a base of comparison, I first tried this wheat vodka with a little bit of soda and a touch of lime. It was smooth with only a slight hint of alcohol and none of the face-scrunch-

ing afterburn you get with lower-quality vodkas. Sadly, my next cocktail attempt was a failure. The kiwi crush (kiwi, lime juice, sugar and vodka) was ill-fated because the only kiwis I could find were not yet ripe enough to mud-

dle into the proper paste for the drink.

Undaunted, I moved on to a variation of sex on the beach, which included the vodka, orange juice and a passion- and tropical-fruit-blended liqueur. The result was delicious. The slight wheat tones of the vodka gave way to the other flavors in the drink, giving it a stronger kick but still without any of the ethanol aftertaste.

Next, I tested this vodka's abilities in the kitchen. I chose recipes that called for the vodka to be added as one of the last ingredients so it wouldn't all get cooked off. The first recipe was pasta shells stuffed with spinach, chicken and a blend of cheeses with tomato vodka sauce. I've made this dish previously with a different brand of vodka, and it turned out, well, boozy. The Blue Ice wheat vodka amped up the other flavors in the sauce without any hint of alcohol. Next on the menu was a vodka-vanilla cheesecake torte with vodka-soaked berries. This turned out to be a great match. The vodka in the cheesecake melted into the other ingredients despite not being cooked off. The vodka-soaked berries had a bit more bite than they would have had on their own but, still, no grainy alcohol aftertaste.

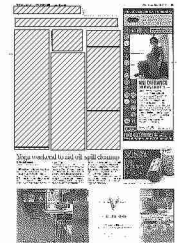
I have yet to really immerse myself in the whole organic movement, but in the case of this vodka, I believe that the organic fermentation process, which uses no chemical additives of any kind, has resulted in a refreshing, mellow liquor that smacks of quality instead of booze.

You can find this vodka at Eagle Ranch Wine & Spirits.

Krista Driscoll, Daily Staff Writer

2009 Bieler Pere et Fils Rose Coteaux d'Aix en Provence, \$12

Winemaker Charles Bieler, continu-



ing the reputation for great-value wine that he built with his family over 13 years at Chateau Routas and the past three years with Three Thieves, launched Bieler Pere et Fils in homage to his father, Philippe, and named this wine for his



daughter Sabine. Bieler Pere et Fils Rose is a delicious dry rose from Provence now in its fifth vintage. This rich, deeply colored rose is Syrah-driven (60 percent) blended with Grenache and Cinsault. This is a fantastic wine to usher in the spring, combining the rich flavors of a red wine with the refreshing qualities of a white. This is a true wine gem! Bieler Pere et Fils Rose is coral-pink in color with a gorgeous nose of blackberry, strawberry and cassis. It is beautifully crisp and flavorful on the palate with medium body and notes of red berries and citrus and no oak. The finish is long and refreshing.

Enjoy Bieler Pere et Fils Rose now and over the next two to three years as the perfect patio aperitif wine. It matches up beautifully with a Dijon vinaigrette salad, roast chicken, grilled shrimp and mild cheeses. I think of a great Sunday barbecue as the perfect setting for this wonderful rose.

You can find this wine at Alpine Wine & Sprits in Vail, Avon Liquor, Beaver Liquors in Avon, Eagle Ranch Wine & Spirits, Riverwalk Wine & Spirits in Edwards, Village Warehouse Wines in Avon and West Vail Liquor Mart.

Kevin Lawrence, Avon Liquor

'THE SLIGHT WHEAT TONES OF THE VODKA GAVE WAY TO THE OTHER FLAVORS IN THE DRINK, GIVING IT A **STRONGER KICK BUT STILL WITHOUT ANY OF THE ETHANOL AFTERTASTE.**'

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